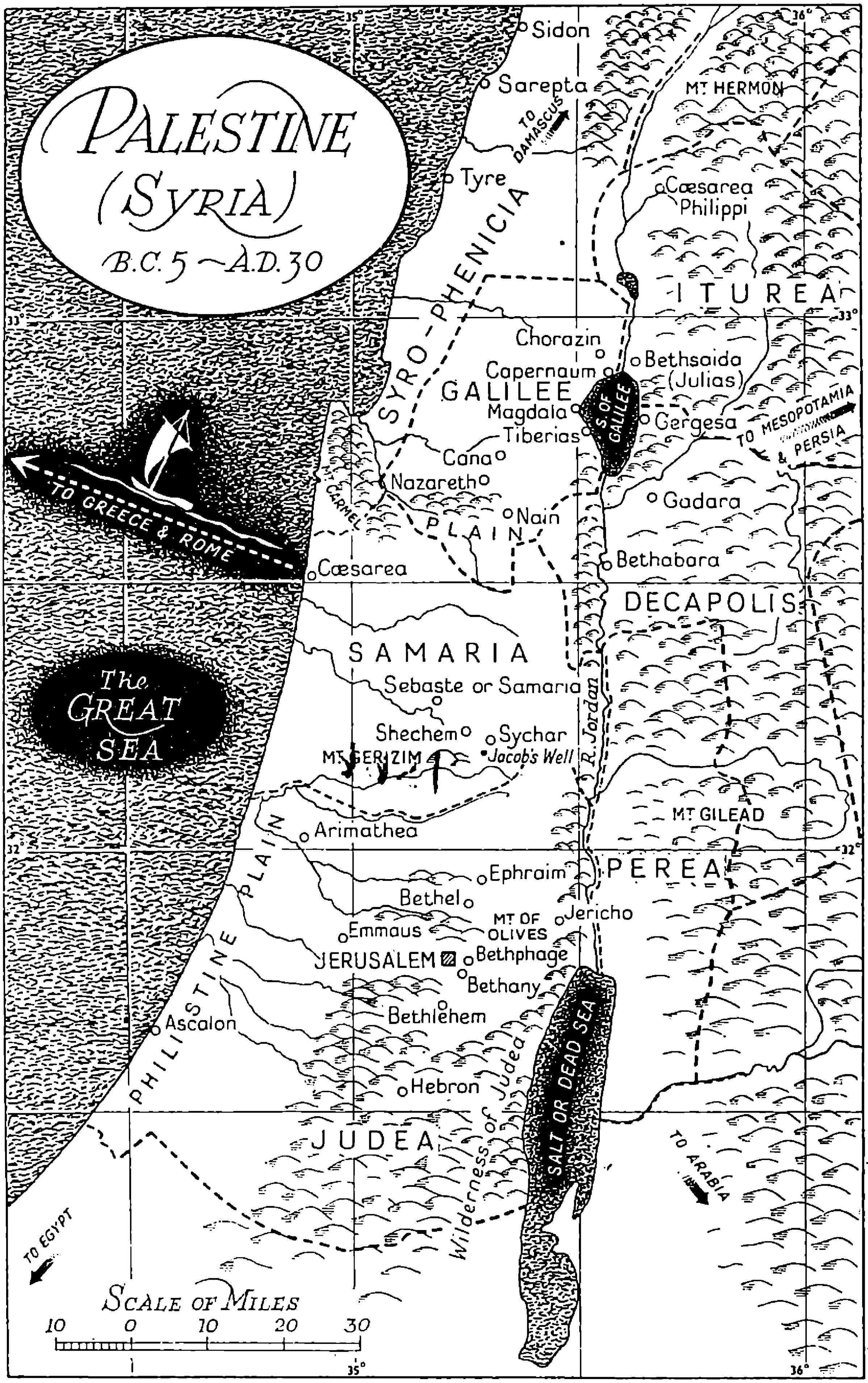
THE MESSAGE OF THE NEW KINGDOM

R.K. & M.I.R. POLKINGHORNE

WESTON TRAINING COLLEGE
MADRAS.

SELF-HELP LESSONS IN
RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

THE MESSAGE OF THE NEW KINGDOM


PALESTINE
(SYRIA)
B.C. 5 ~ A.D. 30
Sidon
Sarepta
TO DAMASCUS
MT. HERMON
Tyre
SYRO-PHENICIA
Cæsarea Philippi
ITUREA
Chorazin
Capernaum
Bethsaida (Julias)
GALILEE
Magdala
S. OF GALILEE
Tiberias
Gergesa
TO MESOPOTAMIA & PERSIA
Cana
Nazareth
MT. CARMEL
Nain
PLAIN
Gadara
TO GREECE & ROME
Cæsarea
Bethabara
DECAPOLIS
SAMARIA
Sebaste or Samaria
The GREAT SEA
Shechem
Sychar
MT. GERIZIM
Jacob's Well
R. Jordan
MT. GILEAD
Arimathea
PLAIN
Ephraim
PEREA
Bethel
MT. OF OLIVES
Jericho
Emmaus
JERUSALEM
Bethphage
Bethany
Bethlehem
Ascalon
PHILISTINE
SALT OR DEAD SEA
Wilderness of Judea
Hebron
JUDEA
TO ARABIA
TO EGYPT
SCALE OF MILES
10 0 10 20 30
33°
32°
35°
36°

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R. K. and M. I. R.
POLKINGHORNE

TRAINING COLL
1566

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PREFACE

THIS book is one of a series of " Self-Help Lessons in Religious Instruction," designed to tell the long story of the gradual development of man's conception of God and of moral standards. Such a long story is of great interest if readers learn to help themselves to think, connect ideas, and " do something." The Old Testament tells us very beautifully how man came first to know God. When you read the stories of Jesus and His message in *The Message of the New Kingdom*, you must think and ask yourself, " How did the Jews first get to know God ? " " How did the Hebrews get the name of Jews ? "

The answers to these and many other questions will be found in the stories of the Old Testament, which should be read side by side with those of the New Testament. Some of these stories will be found in *Heroes of Faith*, a companion book to *The Message of the New Kingdom.* The stories tell of the adventures and heroic deeds of the Hebrews of long ago, and how they came gradually to know God. You will see how all the earlier stages, the failures and successes, led up to a climax—to Jesus Christ, the perfect Teacher.

The Message of the New Kingdom does not, of course, complete the story of Jesus. It is a first book about the New Testament. Further books will tell more about the teaching of Jesus and how He comes to be among us still, an Everlasting Friend. When you read the last story in the *Message of the New Kingdom*, you can almost guess there is more to come.

The story of Jesus does not, of course, end with the Bible. The work of Jesus goes on through all those who

follow in His footsteps, through His Apostles and the great procession of saints and good men up to to-day and beyond. When we read of saints and good men, we are not looking back to them in the past, but onwards with them to the future and upwards with them to Jesus the Perfect Friend. *Heroes of Christianity*, another book in the " Self-Help Lessons in Religious Instruction " series, is designed to form a sequel to the Acts of the Apostles, and to show that Jesus is with us to-day and that God calls men to-day, as he called Abraham long ago, and speaks to them in the " still, small voice " that comforted Elijah long ago in the wilderness.

The scope of these books is, then, to show the continuity of the Bible and that the work and teaching of Jesus are continuous. The purpose of the books is to encourage thought and, above all, *careful* reading; and to suggest work that children can do for themselves.

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

In the different chapters you will find many suggestions that will show you how to help yourself to read, understand and remember. You will meet new, unusual, interesting and lovely words ; make a dictionary for these from an exercise-book or loose pages fastened in a cover. Your dictionary should be useful and interesting—add pictures where you think it necessary. Sometimes write a sentence containing the word, as this often helps to explain it.

Make a booklet for the verses in the New Testament that you think are lovely, or interesting and important. Have a separate booklet for the Psalms that are connected with the New Testament stories you are reading. Be sure to find all the places mentioned on a map. Some places have names with interesting meanings. Make a dictionary for Proper Names—Names of Places, Names of People. Some names can be spelt differently, as *Judæa* and *Judea*, *Zacchæus* and *Zaccheus*, *Bar-Timæus* and *Bar-Timeus*. This is because *æ* in these words is pronounced *e* and really stands for *e*. Notice the links between the different stories. Sometimes one

story helps to explain another. Seeing connecting-links is really thinking. When you have read about the house where Jesus lived in Chapter I, you may find in other chapters facts about Eastern houses that will help to give you clearer pictures of them. You can make a little note-book or have a page in a big note-book for "What I know about houses in Palestine." Then you might collect all it says about the New Kingdom, the Kingdom of God or God's Rule of Love. You will learn more about this in *Heroes of Faith*,[1] but your notes will give you a foundation on which to build. Perhaps you will like to choose for yourself some topic and see what this book tells you about it. Here are some topics to choose. Fishermen of Galilee, The Church or Synagogue Jesus Knew, Schools, Towns that Jesus Knew, Wells, Shepherd Life, Sowing and Reaping, Stories Jesus Told, The Samaritans, The Sabbath Long Ago, The Romans, Vineyards in Palestine, How Jesus helped the Sick in Mind and Body, Friends of Jesus, Helpers and Messengers of Jesus, and so on. It is helpful to have some topics like these in mind when you read the book a second time. The second reading of a book is always the most valuable, because you bring thought and knowledge to it. Make attractive booklets about the stories and topics that interest you most.

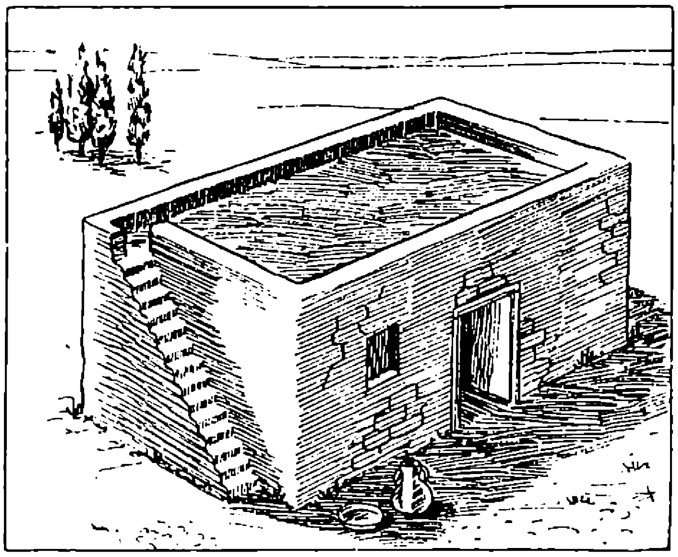
[1] Also in the "Self-Help Lessons in Religious Instruction" series.

CHAPTER I

THE LAND THAT JESUS KNEW

CENTRAL THOUGHT: *Christ came on earth to show us how to live.*

Picture the home of Jesus in Nazareth, a little town among the lower hills of Galilee. It was a small, square, one-roomed house built of rough-hewn stones from the hills. The flat roof served as another room. Stairs outside the house led to it, and there was a wall or parapet around. Often there was no window, or one very small one with a wooden shutter. Palestine is a land of strong sunlight, and enough light came in through the door for ordinary purposes. Fastened to one of the doorposts was a leather case containing a folded piece of parchment. Whenever Jesus entered, He touched the parchment with His fingers and put them to His lips, saying the words written on the parchment: " Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Joseph and Mary taught Jesus these words. They were the first lines of the Bible that a Jewish child was taught to repeat. From



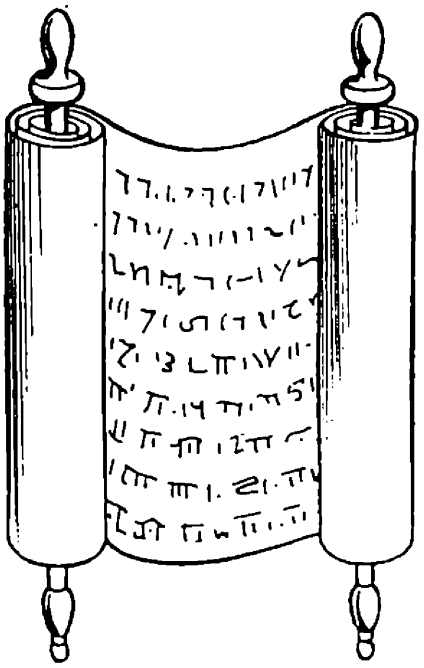
A HOUSE IN GALILEE

Joseph and Mary, too, He heard stories of the great men and women of His race—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph—the stories that you yourselves are learning.

In the coming chapters you will learn more about homes in Palestine. Fold some sheets of paper together to make a note-book. On the cover draw a little flat-roofed house (see picture). Inside there was only one room, which was divided into two parts. The lower part, round the entrance, was used as a stable for an animal or two. The upper part, built some two or three feet higher, formed a sort of platform reached by a few shallow steps; this was the living and sleeping room of the family. The grinding of corn, the cooking and much of the other work was done out of doors, for Palestine is a sunny land with long dry summers and mild winters, when most of the rain falls.

Begin to write notes about a peasant's house in the book you have made. As you read the different chapters, if you are alert you will find many facts to write about the house and its furniture. Drawings will add interest to your book.

When Jesus was six, He went to school. His school was a room attached to the Synagogue, the place where every Sabbath the Jews went to worship God. The rabbi, a teacher, was the keeper of the Synagogue, in whose care were the Rolls of the Scriptures (all books in those days were written by hand and were in the form of rolls, see picture). The boys sat cross-legged on the floor, facing the schoolmaster, whose seat was on a slightly raised platform.



A ROLL OR BOOK

The children's first task was to learn by heart passages from the Scriptures by repeating them over and over again after the rabbi.

Now, the language spoken by Jesus was Aramaic, the language of Syria and Palestine, but the Scriptures were written in Hebrew, the ancient language of the Jews. The children, therefore, before they could read the sacred rolls, had to learn to read and write, not only in their own tongue, but also in Hebrew. When the children had learnt several verses well, they were written down for them on wooden reading tablets. Letter by letter, the children were taught to pick out the words they had just learnt to say. In this way they read many

verses from the first five books of the Old Testament, known as the Law, the most sacred of all the rolls or books to the Jews.

Besides learning the Law and to read and write, Jesus had to learn a trade, for no Jewish boy's education was complete without manual training. Jesus learnt to be a carpenter.

Boys who wanted a higher education went to

α = a	β = b
γ = g	δ = d
χ = ch	ρ = r

GREEK LETTERS

study under one of the famous rabbis in Jerusalem. There were places in the courts of the Temple where the rabbis taught (see Chapter III).

Jesus also knew Greek, because Greek was the common language of merchants and traders, and was known by all educated people in the countries round the eastern Mediterranean Sea. You have learnt perhaps in your history lessons how Alexander the Great, King of Macedonia and Greece, conquered the East in 331 B.C., and spread Greek

learning everywhere in Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine and Egypt. Thus it was that in all the important towns, Greek became the common language. In the time of Jesus every town was in a sense a Greek town as well as a Roman town. Famous Greek towns were Antioch, Damascus and Alexandria.

Rome was the ruling power, and Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine and Egypt were all parts of the Roman Empire.

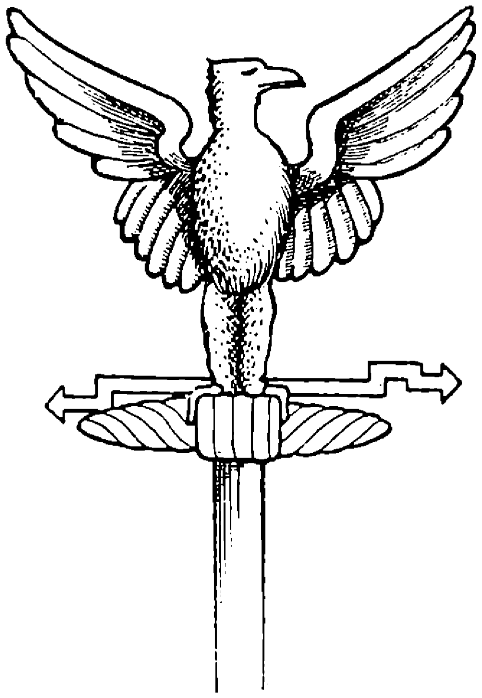
Look at the map of Palestine, and you will see that the part west of the River Jordan was divided into three main areas: Galilee in the north, Samaria in the middle, and Judea in the south. Samaria and Judea formed the Roman province of Judea under a Roman governor: Galilee, together with a large area to the east of the Jordan, called Perea, formed another province ruled for the Roman Emperor by a tetrarch called Herod. Besides these two provinces, there were many others all ruled by governors for the Emperor. In every province there were Roman soldiers to keep the peace. These were divided into companies of 100 men, under officers called centurions. These officers are mentioned in some of the stories. Look out for the mention of centurions.

The Empire, on the whole, was ruled well. There was justice (rough sometimes), peace, freedom for men to worship according to the customs

of their religions, freedom of trade. Travel was possible and safe because of good roads, so that all sorts of people moved about freely, rich folk for health and pleasure, as well as rulers, officials, merchants, traders, scholars, etc.

You will often read about the tax-collectors. The taxes were used for the upkeep of the roads, and for keeping soldiers in the different provinces.

Jesus must often have heard the sound of Roman trumpets and seen the Roman legions marching by, the eagles on the standards glittering in the sun. He heard, too, stories of Rome, of the great Emperor far away in the west, of the Roman rulers of the different parts of Palestine, of Herod the Great and his sons, one of whom built the Roman city of Tiberias, on the western shores of the Sea of Galilee. It was Herod the Great who built a grand Temple in Jerusalem for the Jews (see Chapter III).



THE ROMAN EAGLE

A great highway running north to Damascus, the capital of Syria, and south to Egypt passed near Nazareth. Jesus saw many caravans of merchants pass, caravans from Damascus and Mesopotamia carrying silks

and spices, some to be sent from the seaports of Cæsarea, Tyre or Sidon to many parts of the Mediterranean world, some to go south along the coast to Egypt. He saw also princes and nobles journeying on business or pleasure.

It was a world ready for the teaching of Christ. The Greeks and Romans, clever though they were, had no religion that made any difference in their lives. Most of the educated Greeks and Romans no longer believed in their many gods and goddesses—Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Venus—but they often thought there must be one God like the God of the Jews, and they called Him the Unknown God. Greek thought and love of beauty were there to appreciate the truth that Jesus was to teach, and Roman law and order and roads were there to spread it.

It was not by chance that Christ lived in Galilee. We must not think of it as an out-of-the-way part of the world. The Sea of Galilee was the centre of Galilean life. There were many towns on its banks; Capernaum was the centre of a flourishing fishing trade and a boat-building industry; Magdala, on the western shore, was famous for its dyes; Bethsaida (Julias) and Tiberias were fine Roman cities. Then there was the Greek city of Gadara, to the south of the lake. You may be able to picture better the blue lake in its deep valley, the towns, the busy life, the great highway, the corn-

fields, vineyards and olive groves, and the little town of Nazareth among the hills when you have read the coming chapters.

SELF-HELP WORK: Read about Greece and Rome in your history book, *People of Long Ago* (University of London Press). Make booklets about (*a*) Greece. Copy in some Greek letters to help you to remember that Greek was the common language in our Lord's time, and the language of scholars ; thus it was that the New Testament was first written in Greek, the grandest of all languages. Put in descriptions and pictures of Greek buildings —theatres, temples, vases, etc. (*b*) Rome. Rome copied Greece, and so many Roman buildings are like the Greek. Find pictures of city walls and gateways, bridges, Roman soldiers, Roman standards, etc. Write the names of some towns built by the Romans in Palestine: *Cæsarea* on the coast, built by Herod the Great; *Samaria*, rebuilt by Herod, with a magnificent temple in honour of the Emperor Augustus.

Copy and learn the verse from the Old Testament that foretells the coming of Christ: Is. ix. 26. Collect verses from the prophets that foretold the coming of Christ. Draw a sketch-map of Palestine in the days of Jesus. Show clearly the Sea of Galilee, the River Jordan, the Dead Sea, and the

three divisions, Galilee, Samaria, Judea, and some of the chief towns (see map). Study a map of the Mediterranean Sea, notice the countries in the eastern Mediterranean—Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, Egypt. There are many words for your dictionaries : synagogue, centurion, tetrarch (governor of fourth part of a country or province, ruler under an emperor, subordinate ruler), rabbi (doctor of the Law, teacher), etc. There are some important proper names—Aramaic, the language of Syria and Palestine—and the names of towns, etc.

Make a model of a scroll or roll (the books of long ago). Use two round sticks and a long strip of paper.

CHAPTER II

TO JERUSALEM FOR THE PASSOVER

CENTRAL THOUGHT: "*The Lord shall keep thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth and for evermore.*"—Psalm cxxi. 8.

The people of Nazareth were preparing for their greatest festival, the Feast of the Passover, to celebrate God's wonderful work when He freed the Israelites from the cruel Pharaoh. It was held in the springtime, when the ears of wheat were forming, for wheat ripens much earlier in the warm Mediterranean lands than in England. Thus, the festival also celebrated the beginning of the harvest. Jews from all parts went up to Jerusalem for the Passover, when unleavened bread was eaten to recall with what haste their forefathers left Egypt; they could not wait for the bread to rise.

For many years Jesus had watched the people of Nazareth set off on their three days' journey to Jerusalem. Now He was to go Himself. He was twelve years of age. At thirteen, a Jewish boy became a Son of the Law, and was held by the rabbis to be responsible for his actions. He was "grown-up."

The people of Narazeth set off in groups or companies. Try to picture the journey of the group that included Jesus, Mary and Joseph. They had some eighty miles to go, so Joseph loaded his donkey with everything needed for the long journey, sleeping-mats and food—bread, cheese, figs, olives. They went down the hills southwards to the Plain of Esdraelon and its sunny barley fields. Here they camped for the night. Before them they could see the distant hills of Samaria. They were going due south through these hills to-morrow. Samaritans hated the Jews, so Jewish travellers from Galilee to Jerusalem often turned to the east here to avoid Samaria, and went down to the Jordan valley, which they followed to Jericho, and then climbed the hills to Jerusalem. But a great body of pilgrims were not afraid to follow the straight road through Samaria.

The next day they began their journey through Samaria. They passed the town of Samaria, rebuilt by Herod the Great and called Sebaste, a fine city with its justice hall, theatre and palace. They saw Mount Gerizim, with its temple, where the Samaritans said God could be rightly worshipped, and not at Jerusalem. They stopped to drink at Jacob's Well, dug hundreds of years ago by Jacob, and here they camped for the night.

The next day they crossed a fertile valley of

cornfields, and began to climb a steep track that wound upwards to the grey ridge of the hills of Judea. Farther on they saw the hill that Jacob called Bethel. At last, coming round a bend in a valley, they saw the towering grey walls of Jerusalem above them. Now all talking ceased, and the pilgrims started one of the lovely Songs of Ascents that all knew:

" They that trust in the Lord
Are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth for ever.
As the mountains are round about Jerusalem,
So the Lord is round about his people,
From this time forth and for evermore."

Ps. cxxv.

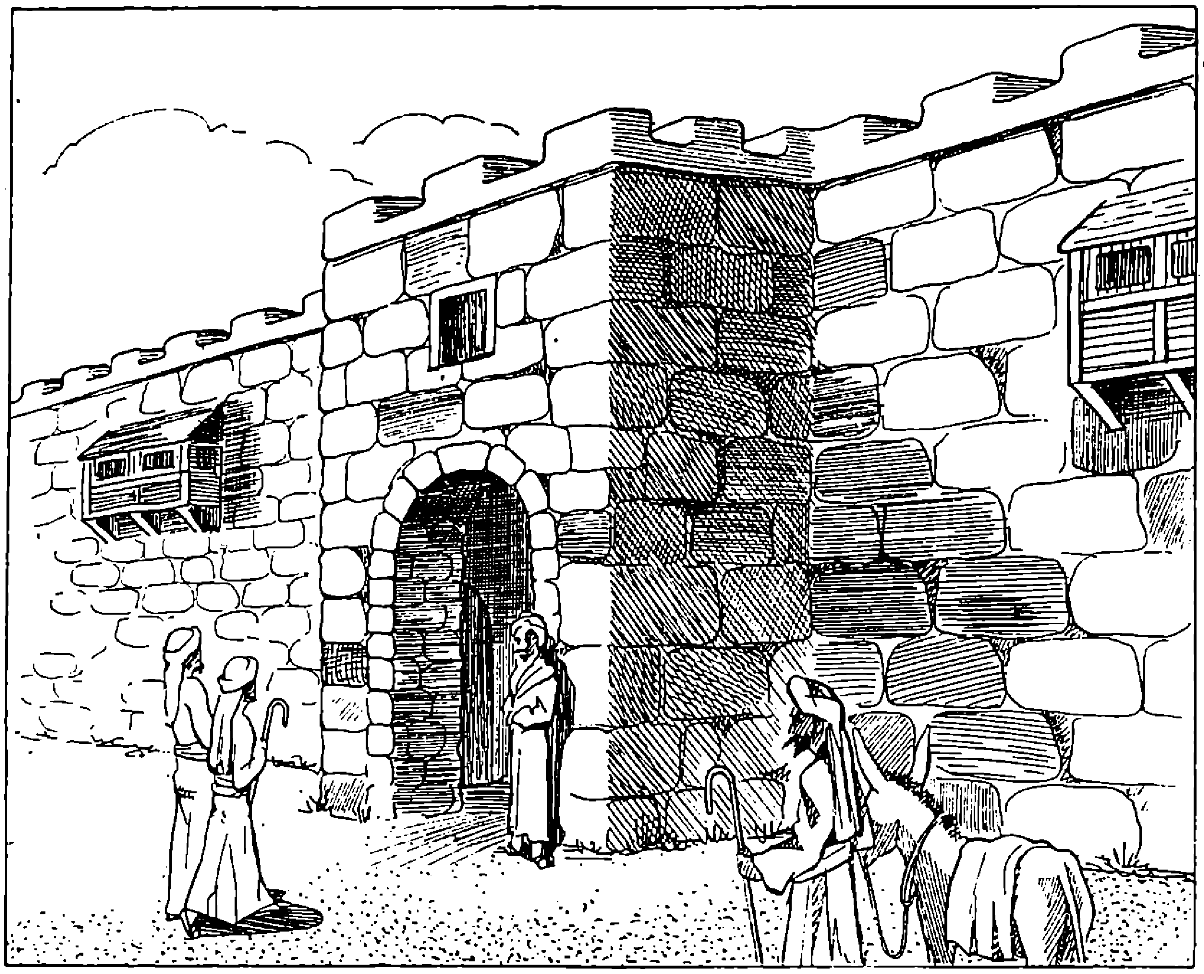
The Galilean pilgrims now turned to the left to climb the Mount of Olives to their regular camping-ground. On all the hills about Jerusalem there were camps, for there were Jews from every part of the world: Jews who had come on camels from Persia and from the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates; learned rabbis who had come by sea to Cæsarea, from Athens or the University of Alexandria; weavers of tents from Asia Minor; merchants from the broad plains of the Danube, from the banks of the Rhine, from Gaul, Spain, Italy, Greece and all parts of the Roman Empire. They came because Jerusalem was the centre of their

religion: here only could sacrifices be offered for the forgiveness of sins, here was God's Holy House.

JERUSALEM ON MOUNT MORIAH AND MOUNT ZION

From the Mount of Olives, Jesus could look across the deep ravine of the Kidron to Jerusalem, built on Mount Zion and Mount Moriah (the Temple was built on Mount Moriah). He could see the great walls that encircled the city for four miles around, crowned by towers. Perhaps He could see the sun shining on the helmets and shields of the Roman soldiers as they kept watch on the parapet of the Castle of Antonia, a Roman fortress that guarded the Temple. The sentinels kept a special look-out when there were so many thousands of people in the Temple Courts, for fear of riots or disturbances.

As Jesus lay down to sleep that night, He could still hear the joyful songs of more and more pilgrims arriving. The lovely words that com-



A GATEWAY INTO JERUSALEM

forted the pilgrims of long ago can comfort us to-day:

"The Lord shall keep thee from all evil;
He shall keep thy soul.
The Lord shall keep thy going out and coming in,
From this time forth and for evermore."

Ps. cxxi. 7, 8.

SELF-HELP WORK: Trace the journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem on the map. Draw a sketch-map of the journey. Find out more about Jerusalem. Make a booklet for the facts you discover. Jerusalem dates from before the days of Abraham.

First it was a mountain fortress on Mount Zion. Find out how David conquered it. As the city grew in size, the walls were rebuilt from time to time. The Temple that Herod rebuilt for the Jews was on Mount Moriah, which was connected with Mount Zion by a bridge. Draw the walls of Jerusalem or a gateway into Jerusalem on the cover of your booklet. Make an interesting booklet about the journey of Jesus from Nazareth to Jerusalem.

Read or listen to some of the Songs of Ascents being read. Choose some to copy in your Book of Favourite Verses. Be sure to copy the inspired Pilgrims' Song, Ps. cxxv. 1–2. These are also lovely verses: Ps. cxxi. 1–2, 7, 8; cxxii. 1–9. Add new or difficult words to your Word Book: Passover, ravine. It will help you if you study a map of the Roman Empire and see from what different parts the Jews came. They were scattered all over the known world.

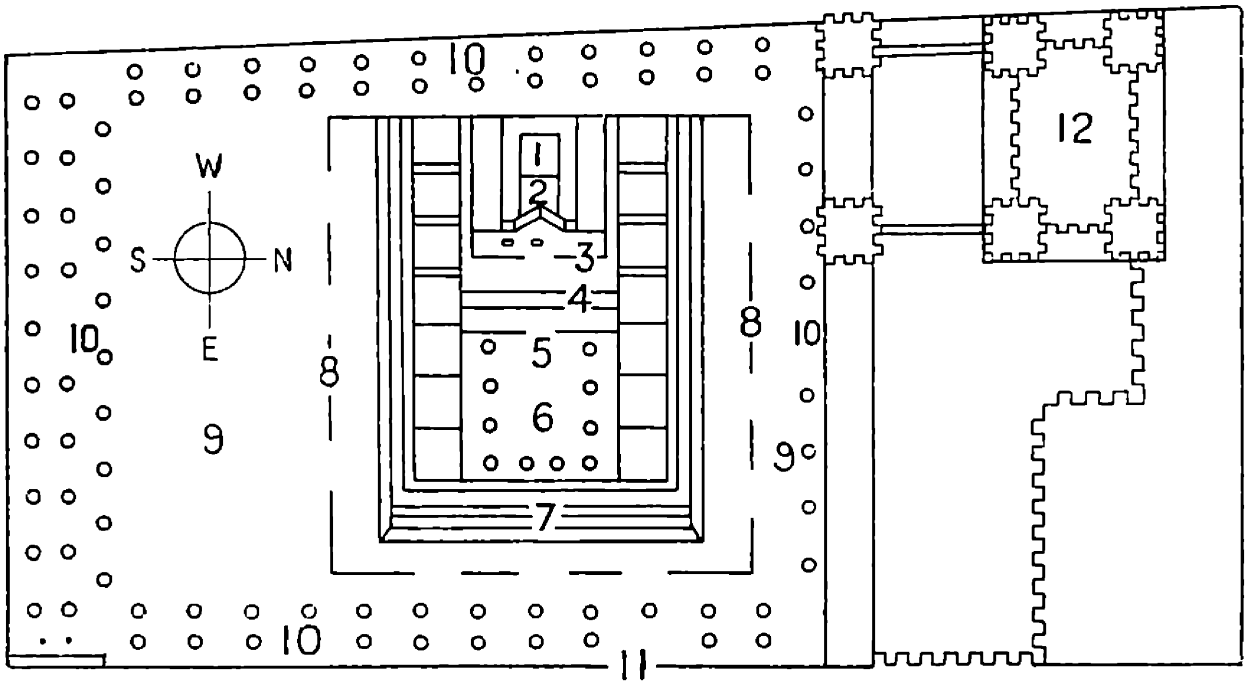
CHAPTER III

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE COURTS

CENTRAL THOUGHT: *When God calls to us, there we must always be.*

The next morning Jesus and Joseph went to the Temple. Thousands of pilgrims were going there too. Look at the plan on the opposite page, and you can understand better what the Temple was like. Although all the enclosure is spoken of as the Temple, the real Temple was a small building which contained the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies (1 and 2 on the plan). Only priests could enter the Holy Place, and only the High Priest the Holy of Holies. In the Holy of Holies was the Mercy Seat, just a stone (in place of the Ark of olden days) representing God's throne. Curtains separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. The Temple was built of white stone on the highest part of the mountain, and its golden roof could be seen from all parts of Jerusalem.

Jesus and Joseph entered by the Golden Gate (11 on plan) and crossed the cloister (10 on plan) into the Court of the Gentiles or Nations. This was the only court into which Gentiles were allowed.



PLAN OF THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM

(1) Holy of Holies }
(2) Holy Place } Temple.
(3) }
(4) } Courts of Israel and of the Priests, with rooms around and altar.
(5) Gate of Nicanor.
(6) Court of the Women, with cloisters and rooms around.
(7) Gate Beautiful.
(8) Wall of Partition.
(9) Court of the Gentiles.
(10) Cloisters; Solomon's Porch on the east; Royal Porch on the south; West Cloister; North Cloister.
(11) Golden Gate.
(12) Roman Fortress or Castle of Antonia.

Around it were covered arcades or cloisters, the roofs supported by lovely marble columns. In the court there were merchants selling lambs and doves for sacrifices, and money-changers supplying the half-shekels that all pilgrims to the Temple had to pay. It was very noisy and something like a market. Joseph bought a lamb to offer to God and to use for the Passover Supper. Then they passed a low wall, the Wall of Partition (8 on the plan), that had notices on it to say that no one who was not a Jew might pass beyond it or he would be put to

death. Joseph little knew that the boy who walked beside him would one day declare to all the world that God could be worshipped *anywhere*, and that it was not His will that men should be killed for coming to any place to worship Him. Now they went up more steps through two lovely bronze doors, the Gate Beautiful (7), into the Court of the Women (6), so called because women could go no farther. Fifteen steps led up from this Court to the Court of Israel and the Priests (3 and 4), where was the altar of sacrifice, and the " Temple " (1 and 2), reached by more steps.

Jesus could not go into the Court of Israel, for He was only twelve, so He waited in the Court of the Women while Joseph took the lamb up the steps and through another fine door, the Gate of Nicanor (5), into the Court of Israel. The Levites sounded blasts on their trumpets, and the lamb was offered to God. The parts of the lamb that were to be kept for the Passover Supper were placed on a dish and held up to the altar while incense, the symbol of prayer, was burnt.

While Jesus waited, He heard the Levites on the top of the steps singing the psalms that praised God for the delivery of the people of Israel from the slavery of Egypt.

When Joseph returned, they hurried back to Mary. At sunset the meal was ready, a meal of

roast lamb, herbs of different kinds, lettuce, parsley, unleavened bread and red wine and water. Before the meal began Jesus, as the youngest, asked, as the youngest always did at Passover: "Why is this night different from all other nights?" And Joseph related the story of the escape of the Israelites from Egypt. Then they sang Ps. cxiii. 3, 4:

> "From the rising of the sun unto the going down of
> the same
> The Lord's name is to be praised.
> The Lord is high above all nations,
> And his glory above the heavens."

Other lovely psalms were sung during the meal.

The next day Joseph and Mary prepared to go home with many of their fellow pilgrims from Nazareth. Thousands of Jews were staying longer, some to learn from the rabbis in the Temple. When the party from Nazareth at last started, they never noticed that Jesus was not among them. It was at supper-time that Mary and Joseph first missed Him. They looked for Him among their friends and relations, but no one had seen Him. At last they decided to return to Jerusalem. They searched along the Mount of Olives and through the streets of Jerusalem. Then the thought came to them, "Perhaps He is in the Temple Courts." They went into the still crowded courts, and suddenly

they saw Him, His face alert and eager. He was in one of the arcades or cloisters with a group of learned rabbis, listening and asking questions. The rabbis were looking at Him as though they were astonished. Joseph and Mary were astonished too. He had even forgotten them. He was thinking only of His Heavenly Father and the work He had to do one day. As He listened to the rabbis teaching and emphasising the Law, He began to see the changes He must make. There must be no more lambs or doves offered to God, He Himself would be the pledge of God's forgiveness. The sacrifice that God demanded was work, a living sacrifice. He must teach, too, that God is present everywhere, not only in the Temple. No wonder, in the vision of the future before Him, He gave no heed to time. Suddenly a voice He loved rang in His ears, a voice of gladness and reproach.

" Son," said Mary, " why have you dealt thus with us? Behold, your father and I have sought you, sorrowing."

He answered, love and surprise in His eyes, " How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business? "

His mother hardly understood what He meant, but she kept the saying and all that had happened in her heart. Jesus had come into the world, not simply to live at home with them, but to do " His

Father's business," and where the Father called to Him, there He must always be. Jesus knew, as He heard Mary's voice, that now for Him to be about His Father's business meant that He was to return to Nazareth and to His work with Joseph in the carpenter's shop. So He said good-bye to the rabbis, and the little family went northwards over the hills and through the valleys to Nazareth.

We know few stories of the boyhood of Jesus, but the Bible says, "He grew in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and man." His days of quiet work, and waiting for God's call in the carpenter's shop, teach us that we too must be always ready for God's call in the place He wants us to be.

SELF-HELP WORK: Study the plan of the Temple buildings. Copy it, making the plan larger. This drawing will help you to understand many of the coming stories. Make a booklet about the Temple. Find out all you can about the first Temple, Solomon's Temple. Add notes to your booklet from time to time. Herod's Temple was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70. It has never been rebuilt. You may like to copy under your plan of the Temple the words inscribed in Greek and Latin on tablets on the Wall of Partition. One of these tablets was discovered in 1871. "No foreigner is to

pass within the partition wall and enclosure around the Temple; whoever is caught so doing will himself be the cause that death overtakes him."

This wall was a symbol of the enmity existing between Jew and Gentile, and is referred to by St. Paul: "Christ has made both [Jew and Gentile] one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us" (Eph. ii. 14). There were other entrances to the Temple Court beside the Golden Gate; for example, one into the Royal Porch from the west.

Revise the story of the escape of the Israelites from Egypt, and the story of the Tabernacle and Ark; this latter story will help you to understand the Temple that took the place of the Tabernacles. Copy some verses from Ps. cxv.–cxviii. These were sung at the end of the Passover Supper. The Jews still keep the Passover to-day. Although they cannot keep it as in olden days, they do it as well as they can. Add new words, interesting words and words you might forget to your Word Book, i.e. *rabbi*, a Hebrew word meaning Doctor of the Law and Teacher; *cloister*, a porch or covered walk often with stone seats; *pilgrims*, those who visit a holy or sacred spot; *Gentile*, and so on. Make a Bible A.B.C., and see how many interesting words you can find for each letter, e.g. A: altar, ark; B: Bethel; C: Cæsarea, cloister.

CHAPTER IV

THE VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

CENTRAL THOUGHT: *Jesus came to save sinners.*

There lived in a town among the hills of Judea a boy called John. His father, Zacharias, was a priest who served in the Temple at Jerusalem. When John was young, he often heard his father and mother and their friends speak of the harsh rule of the Romans. They hoped and prayed that one day God would send His Deliverer, the Messiah, to free them. They longed to be ruled again by a king like David. When John grew older, he read more of the Scriptures, especially the writings of the prophet Isaiah, which told about the coming of a Prince of Peace to judge the people. He saw, too, more of the world. He saw the Roman rulers taxing the people, but he saw also the priests of the Temple growing rich on the money given by the pilgrims to the Temple. The Romans were often harsh and cruel, but the Jews were not always kind or merciful. The Pharisees especially cared nothing for the poor or sick.

The Books of the Law contained many laws, and to these the Scribes and rabbis had added hundreds

of regulations that none of the poorer Jews could hope to keep, so that they were almost outcasts.

John did not become a priest like his father, though everyone expected him to, as it was such a good position. Instead, he went into the wilderness to think. He was too full of thought to trouble about food or clothes. He ate the honey of the wild bee, locusts and roasted carob beans that he obtained sometimes from wandering tribes; he wore a rough tunic of camel hair.

Among the wild and lonely rocks, he spent long hours in thought. These were the questions he tried to answer: When the Deliverer came, would He be pleased with His people? Were they not too selfish and proud? Ought they not to prepare for His coming by a change of heart? Did they think enough of their duties to God and their neighbours? Often he thought of the beautiful words of the prophet Isaiah:

> "The voice of one that crieth in the wilderness,
> Prepare ye the way of the Lord,
> Make straight his path.
> Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low;
> And the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places smooth;
> And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed."
>
> Isa. xl. 3–5.

John felt that his work was to prepare the way for the Deliverer. He was the Voice. He must tell the people all his thoughts; he must get them to prepare for the new Kingdom, the Kingdom of the Messiah, the Kingdom of God.

He came down from the hills to the banks of the Jordan. Then he stood by the ford, speaking to all who passed. " Repent," he cried, " for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." The Jews were very interested. The Kingdom of God was at hand, and they were God's chosen people. Once again they would become a great, free people. " What must we do to prepare for the Kingdom ? " asked some rich Jews. " If you have more than you want, give some to the poor," said John. Even tax-collectors, who were hated by all for their hardness and greed, came to John, asking, " How can we get ready for the Kingdom ? " " Do not collect more than the right taxes," answered John. Soldiers came to him inquiring, " And we, what must we do ? " " Never use violence, never seize people's goods by force. Be content with your army pay."

To the Pharisees, who were so proud and selfish, he spoke very sternly: " Put away your pride and selfishness. Be kind to your poor neighbours. You pretend to be good, but you are not good."

To all he said that to prepare for the Rule of

God they must change not their work but their *ways*. They must be merciful, unselfish and just. They must put away evil and lead good lives.

When a man was really sorry for his sins, John baptised him in the River Jordan, as a sign that his sins were washed away and he was beginning a new life.

Many asked who he was: " Is he the Christ, the Messiah ? " they said to each other.

" No," said John, when he heard them. " I baptise you with water as a sign of repentance, but there is one coming after me who is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not fit even to unfasten."

The echo of John's trumpet-call spread through all the land. Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, who ruled over Galilee and Perea (see map), heard it. He hoped the Jews were not going to revolt and choose their own king. He wondered if he ought not to arrest John as a rebel.

Jesus heard the call, and knew He must put away His carpenter's tools. His Father's business was now something very great—to tell people how to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. He went straight to the River Jordan, and asked John to baptise Him. Perhaps John, with his thoughtful mind and vision of the future, knew who Jesus was, for he said, " No, I need to be baptised by you, yet you come to me."

"Come," answered Jesus, "this is how we should fulfil God's will."

John took Jesus' hand, and they stepped into the river together. And then, as a dove settles gently on its nest, the Spirit of God came to Jesus, and He heard God's voice saying, "This is my Son, my Beloved, in whom I am well pleased."

Jesus was baptised to identify Himself with the sinners whom He had come to save. The Jewish teachers, the rabbis, prided themselves on their aloofness; the Pharisees would not let the hem of their garments touch the ignorant, the poor, the outcast, but Jesus was to be their friend.

Self-help Work: Act the story of John standing by the ford of the Jordan and speaking to passers-by —Pharisees, soldiers, tax-collectors, etc.

The *wilderness* of Judea was west of the Dead Sea, a strange, desolate place (see map). The *carob-* or *locust-tree* bears pods; it is a common tree in Palestine, and its pods are used for feeding pigs, horses, and cattle. It is also the food of the poorest people. The edible *locust* is a large insect like the grasshopper, said to be a good food when roasted; add these words to your Word Book. Other difficult words for you to write notes on in your Word Book are: *Christ*, the Greek word for *Messiah*; *Messiah* means anointed, the anointed one,

the prince, the promised deliverer of the Jews. The *Scribes* and *lawyers* were much the same. They made copies of the Books of the Law and explained the Law. All their burdensome additions to the Law were condemned by Jesus. The *Pharisees* (a proper name, from the Hebrew word meaning " separated " ones) kept themselves apart from the heathen world and from sinners by their scrupulous adherence to the very letter of the Law.

Copy Isa. xl. 1–11 in your Book of Verses. Perhaps, when John said, " I am a voice crying in the wilderness, make ready the way of the Lord," he was thinking of an Eastern king journeying through his kingdom. Before him there used to run a slave shouting, " The King ! The King; way for the King ! " That was John the Baptist's work, just to prepare a way for the coming of the King. Notice how beautifully Isaiah describes the preparations to be made. He too thinks of the preparations to be made for a great king travelling through difficult country; roads must be levelled and made straight—" every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low and the crooked shall be made straight." Hills and valleys represent difficulties or hindrances. How did John try to make things easier for Jesus ?

CHAPTER V

THE CALL OF THE FISHERMEN

CENTRAL THOUGHT: *To obey the call of Jesus, the call to what is good and great.*

Among the many young men who came to listen to and to be baptised by John the Baptist were three young fishermen from the northern shores of the Lake of Galilee.

One day John the Baptist was talking to two of them. One was called Andrew, a Greek name meaning manly. (It was very unusual for a Jew to have a Greek name.) Andrew lived in the busy fishing town of Bethsaida; his brother Simon, who was married, lived in the neighbouring fishing town of Capernaum. With Andrew was his friend John, who also lived at Bethsaida, and had a younger brother called James.

As Andrew and John talked to John the Baptist, Jesus passed by.

" Look," said John the Baptist, " the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." This seems a curious way to describe Jesus, but every Jew knew what it meant. Lamb to the Jews meant giving oneself to others, bearing pain, perhaps

dying for God. So it also meant courage, strength, kingship.

The two friends looked. There was something so attractive about Jesus that they began to follow Him. Hearing footsteps behind Him, Jesus turned and asked kindly, " What do you seek ? "

Hardly knowing what to say, they stammered out another question, " Rabbi [that is, teacher], where do you live ? "

" Come and see," said Jesus, and He led them to a little tent or shelter. There the two friends sat and listened to Jesus until the sun set. Perhaps He told them about His Kingdom, and the people He wanted in His Kingdom. To the two young men it was the most wonderful adventure they had ever had. Many years afterwards, when John was writing his Gospel, he recalled the actual time of this meeting.

The next morning they were sure of two things: first, that Jesus was the Messiah, although He was a poor man, and all the Jews were expecting a Prince, and secondly, they must tell all their friends about Him.

Andrew at once hastened to find his brother Simon, who had come south with him to listen to John the Baptist.

" Simon," he cried, " we have found Him, we

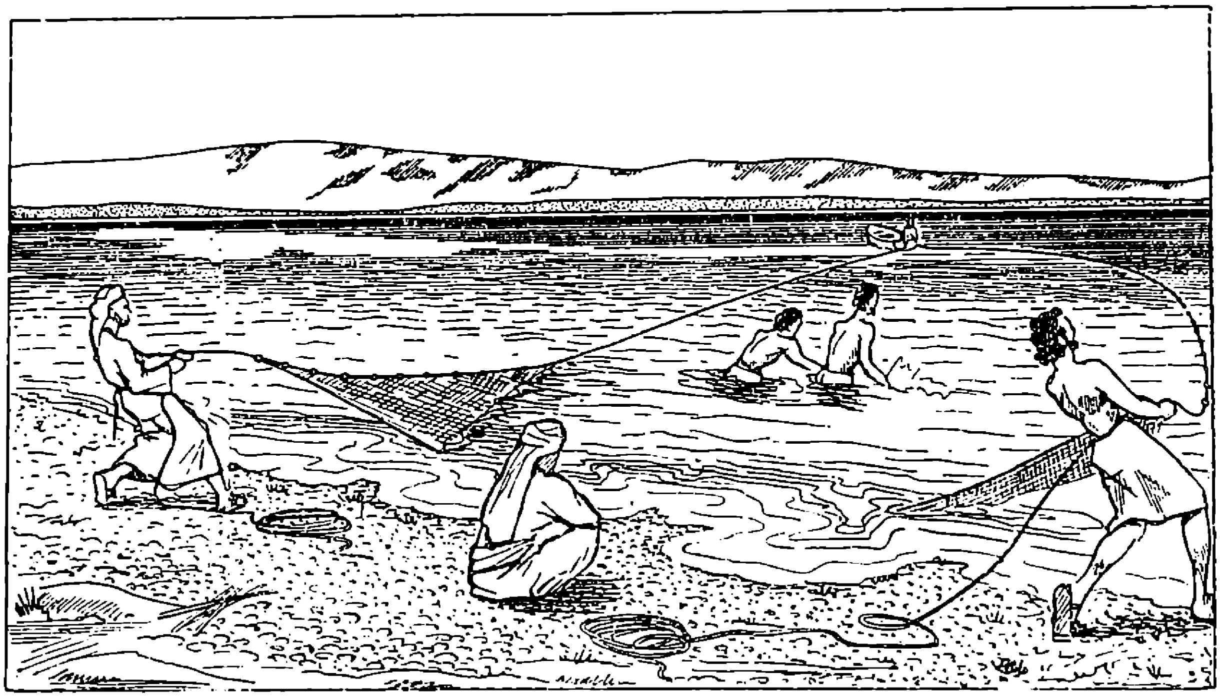
have found the Christ. Come and see Him." So Andrew took his brother Simon to Jesus.

When Jesus saw Simon, He gave him a loving glance. He saw the strength and earnestness of the young man. " So your name is Simon," He said; " I am going to call you Kephas." (Kephas in the language Jesus spoke, Aramaic, means a *rock*. In Greek it is *Petra*, and we call it Peter.) Jesus saw that Simon would one day make a strong leader; that is why He called him by a name that means rock.

The three young fishermen returned north again to Galilee with Jesus. Andrew and John went to their homes in Bethsaida. Jesus went with Simon to his house in the larger town of Capernaum. This house was to be the home to which Jesus came back again and again from His journeys.

At the very first opportunity John brought his brother James to Jesus. Often, when the young fishermen were at work mending their nets or fishing, they spoke of their Hero and the wonderful things He was doing. To work for Him, to see how His healing words made trouble disappear, and how the truth He spoke brightened life like sunshine, seemed to them the grandest thing that they could do. But would He need them ?

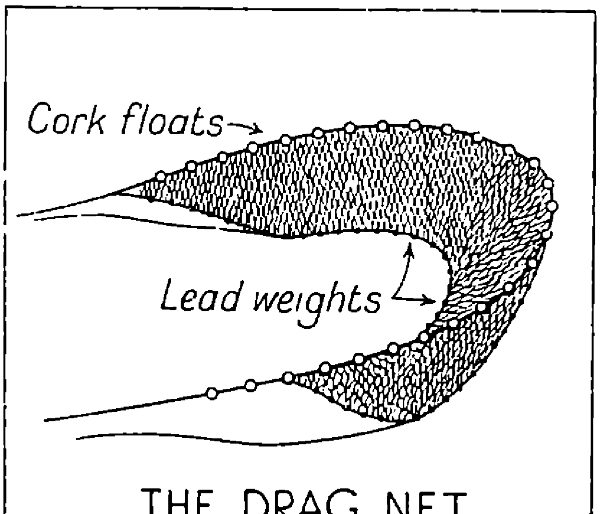
One day, when Simon and Andrew were wading into the water to cast their nets, and thinking about



FISHING BY DRAG NET FROM THE SHORE

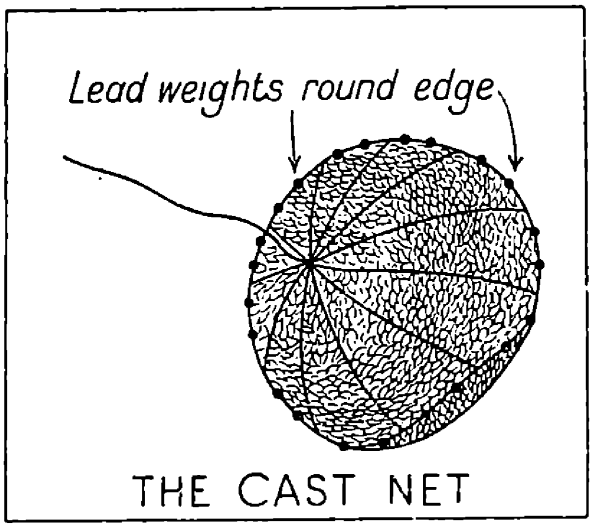
Jesus, they heard His voice calling. " Follow me," He called, " I will make you fishers of men."

You can imagine how gladly they obeyed the summons. They flung their nets over their shoulders, waded ashore and walked with Jesus along the beach. There they came to the boat in which John and James were mending nets with their father Zebedee and his men. Again Jesus called:

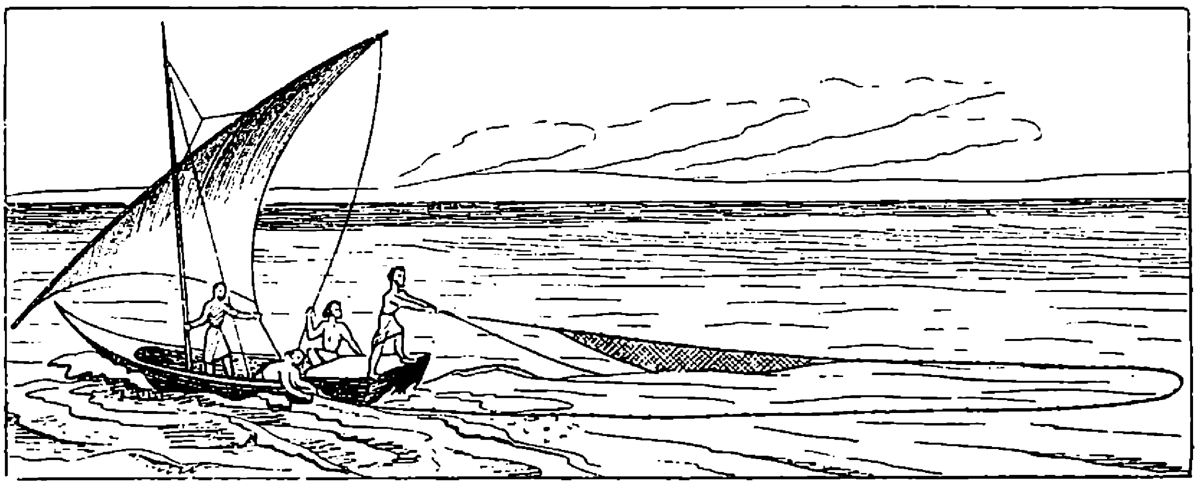


THE DRAG NET

" Come and follow me. I will make you fishers of men." So these four young fishermen set out on their great adventure.



SELF-HELP WORK: Look for the fishing towns of Bethsaida and Capernaum on the map. Make booklets about: (*a*) The Call of the Fishermen. Tell about their work and the nets they used (see pictures). You will often read about fishermen and their work in the New Testament. If you copy the various verses about them, you will be able to make an interesting booklet about "Fishermen in the Days of Christ." (*b*) The story of Simon Peter as told by himself. (*c*) Copy Isa. lxi. 1–3 in your Book of Verses. These verses were written about 452 B.C., that is, some five hundred years before the birth of Christ. They tell about the work that Jesus was going to do, the work you are learning



FISHING BY DRAG NET FROM A BOAT

about. (*d*) Interesting proper names and their meanings—Andrew, Peter, Bethsaida (home or house of fishing). (*e*) The first meeting of Andrew and John with Jesus.

CHAPTER VI

A WONDERFUL SABBATH

CENTRAL THOUGHT: *God is Love.*

One Sabbath day, not so very long after the call of the four fishermen, Jesus walked with them through the narrow streets of Capernaum to the fine synagogue which had been built for the Jews by a Roman officer, a centurion, about whom you will read later.

The Temple at Jerusalem was where sacrifices were offered to God and great festivals held; the synagogue was where people came together to worship God and learn about Him. It was something like our church. In it there was a large platform with a reading-desk. Behind the platform a curtain hid a big chest called the Ark. This contained the precious scrolls or books—the Scroll or Book of the Law and the Scrolls of the Prophets and Scriptures, all beautifully written by hand.

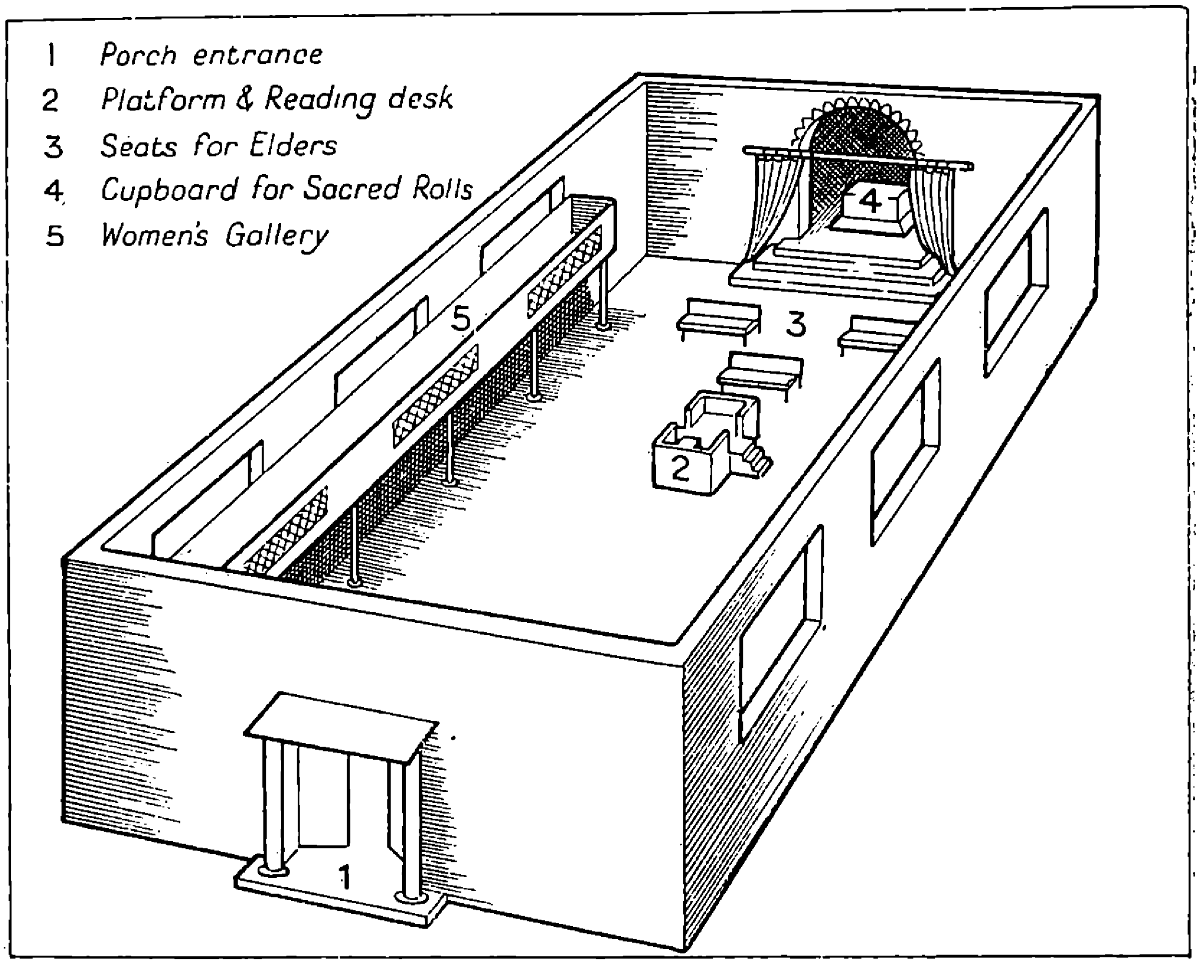
In special seats facing the congregation sat the Leaders and Ruler of the synagogue. There were a few seats for the congregation, but all the poorer people sat on mats on the floor or stood. The

women were up in the gallery behind a wooden trellis screen (see picture).

The service began with the Ruler giving the call to prayer and with some beautiful old prayers. Then the congregation repeated all together the " Hear, O Israel," which was on the doorposts of all their houses (Deut. vi. 4–9). More prayers followed, and as the Ruler carried the Book of the Law from the Ark to the reading-desk, the congregation prayed with words of simplicity and beauty

" Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty ; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine, O Lord, is the Kingdom, and the supremacy as head over all. Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at His holy mount; for the Lord our God is holy."

After the Ruler had read some passages from the Book of the Law and explained them, it was returned to the Ark, and a Book of the Prophets brought out. Sometimes the Ruler, sometimes members of the congregation, gave sermons on the passages read. Often, if a learned stranger were present, he was asked to preach. After the sermons there were discussions. Psalms were sung, and these added great beauty to the simple service, which ended with prayers and a benediction. As a rule, no less than seven members of the con-



PLAN OF A SIMPLE SYNAGOGUE

Compare it with the synagogue built by the Roman centurion (p. 70).

gregation were called on to read from the Law and Prophets during the Sabbath morning service.

On this morning, after the reading from the Law and a talk about it, Jesus was asked to read from the Prophets. Then, as was the custom, He sat down and began to speak to the people. There was a breathless hush, for "no man spoke like this before." The rabbis spoke about the hundred and more rules they had added to the Law, known as "The Tradition of the Elders." These regulations were supposed to make the Law clearer. The

Pharisees declared that not only the Law, but all the regulations added must be obeyed if a man wanted to be saved. Poor people could not learn them all, much less carry them out. There were many rules, for example, about keeping the Sabbath day holy. One rule said that you must not walk on the grass, because it was a kind of threshing, and threshing was forbidden on the Sabbath. Our Lord was repeatedly attacked for healing on the Sabbath, because this was working.

But Jesus spoke of God as a loving Father Who wanted people, above all, to love and forgive each other. You can imagine the joy of Peter, Andrew, James and John as they heard this wonderful new teaching. All thought, " He speaks as though He came straight from God"; as indeed He did.

Before the service was over, Jesus showed the power of love and goodness. A poor madman, ill in mind, had crept in unnoticed. He now suddenly shouted out, "I know Thee who thou art—the Holy One of God. What have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us?" Everyone looked at Jesus to see what He would do. Jesus looked at the poor madman—sternly at the evil in him, kindly at the good. " Be quiet," rang out His voice; " come out of him." And as the man looked into the face of Jesus, all the evil and unhappy thoughts left him.

When the people saw the change in the man, they all wondered, and an excited clamour broke out. The Pharisees were not pleased. They certainly would not have broken the Law by healing or trying to heal anyone on the Sabbath.

Jesus and His friends left the synagogue and went to Simon Peter's house for rest and food. As they entered the courtyard, Peter's wife came hurrying to meet them with a troubled face. Her mother lay sick of a fever. Peter at once thought, "Jesus will help." And Jesus did help. Going to the sick woman lying on her mat, He clasped her hot hand in His. To the relief of all she sat up slowly, declaring she felt better. Then she insisted upon getting up and helping to prepare a meal for Him. When this was over, they went up on the roof for rest. As they looked over the blue lake and watched the sailing-boats, they must have talked of many things, for Jesus had much to teach His helpers.

At evening, when the sun set and the Sabbath was over, there was the clatter of many feet and the murmur of many voices. Simon, looking down from his roof, was surprised to see the whole roadway full of people. Afterwards, when he told the story, he used to say, " All the city was at my door." The fame of Jesus had spread, and the cripples, the sick in mind and body, had come for help. Jesus went out among them and helped and comforted everyone.

Self-help Work: Make booklets about: (*a*) the synagogue. Draw a plan of it (see pictures). Describe the service. (*b*) The Wonderful Sabbath Day. Tell it as Peter might have told it in his diary. How did Jesus show the power of Goodness? Copy in your Book of Verses: (1) The lovely blessing used at the close of the service in the synagogue. The words are those God told Moses to use when blessing the children of Israel—Num. vi. 24–6. (2) John xv. 12. Learn these verses.

Begin to make notes about the Bible and its Books: The *Book of the Law* comprises the first five books of the Bible—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. *Pentateuch* is the Greek name for these five books, and means the *five-volume book*, the Hebrew Pentateuch being written on a single roll. The ordinary Hebrew title is *the Law.* It is believed to have been written by Moses, the great Law Maker, and the Pentateuch is often called "the Law of Moses," the Book of the Law of Moses, or the Book of Moses.

The Prophets, according to the Hebrew Bible, comprise the Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah and the twelve Minor Prophets. *The Writings* or *the Scriptures* include the remaining books—Psalms, Proverbs, Job, etc., Songs of Solomon, Ruth, etc. The division of the

English Bible is different: (1) the Pentateuch; (2) the Historical Books, from Joshua to the end of Esther; (3) the Poetical Books, from Job to the Song of Solomon; (4) the Prophetical Books, from Isaiah to Malachi. There are many interesting words to add to your Word Book: *Pentateuch*, *synagogue* (a Greek word meaning bringing together, or a meeting), *scroll* (roll of paper, book or volume of the ancient roll-form), *scripture* (writing).

Make a book in the ancient roll-form. Make three rolls: (1) The Law, (2) The Prophets, (3) The Scriptures.

CHAPTER VII

THE MEETING AT THE WELL AND WHAT CAME OF IT

CENTRAL THOUGHT: "*God is a spirit; and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.*"—John iv. 24.

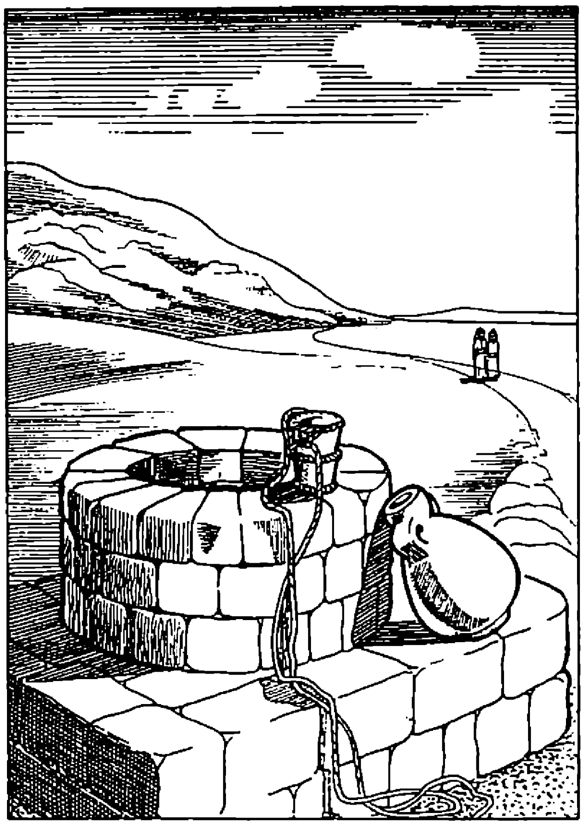
One day, when Jesus and His disciples were journeying through Samaria back to Galilee, they stopped to rest by an old well dug by Jacob long ago at the foot of Mount Gerizim, and so called Jacob's Well. It was about noon, and while Jesus rested, His disciples went to the near-by town of Sychar to buy food.

As Jesus sat there, a woman came to the well, carrying her water-jar and leather bucket. He smiled at her and said, "Give me to drink." It was a simple request, but it filled her with astonishment. No Jew ever spoke to a Samaritan unless it was really necessary.

"How is it," she asked, as she pulled up some water for Him in her bucket, "that you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for water?"

To Jesus, Jews and Samaritans were all children of God. He made no distinction between them, so He

passed over her question and said, " If you had known who it is that said ' Give me to drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you ' living water.' "



JACOB'S WELL
(Notice the leather bucket.)

The woman did not understand. " You have no bucket to draw with," she cried, " and the well is deep. Are you greater than Jacob, who dug this well for us hundreds of years ago ? "

" Whosoever," replied Jesus gently, " drinks of the water from this well will thirst again, but whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. My ' water ' will become a spring within him, welling up into everlasting life."

Still the woman did not understand that by " living water " Jesus meant " the spirit." God is " the fountain of ' living water,' " that is, " the fountain of life."

" Sir," she said, " give me that water, so that I may never thirst, nor come continually all this way to draw water." She sighed as she said, " all this way," for Jacob's Well was some little distance from

Sychar. Although there was a well in Sychar, the woman did not like to use it because she had sinned, and the women who gathered around the well at Sychar to gossip would have little to do with her. Only a few came to Jacob's Well, because it was somewhat farther away, but the water was said to be better.

Jesus knew that she was a sinner, and He began to ask her some questions about her home life. In a moment the woman found out that Jesus knew all about her, and she thought it was very kind of Him to speak to her. She felt sure He must be a great prophet.

" Master, you are a prophet," she cried. " Tell me where we ought to worship God. Long ago my people worshipped on this mountain," pointing to Gerizim, " but you Jews say that men must worship at Jerusalem."

" It does not matter so much about the place," said Jesus, " but God wants the worship of true hearts." Then He spoke words that stand among the greatest that ever fell from His lips. " Believe me, O woman, the time is at hand when men will worship God neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem. The time is at hand, nay it now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for indeed the Father desires such worshippers. God is a spirit ; and they

that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth."

The woman answered humbly, "I know that the Christ is coming; when he is come, he will tell us everything."

"I who now talk with you am he," said Jesus. As the woman gazed at Him in wonder and joy, His disciples returned. They were not pleased to see their Master talking to a Samaritan woman. Seeing their frowning faces, she hurried off to tell her good news, leaving her water-pot and leather bucket behind.

"Come," she called to the men of Sychar, "there is a man at Jacob's Well who knows all about even me. I do believe he is the Christ."

Many of the Samaritans set out for the well.

In the meantime the disciples spread the food they had brought out on the well side and begged Jesus to eat, but He said, "I have been doing work for God, and that refreshes me more than eating or drinking." Then, pointing both to the cornfields and to the men who were now hurrying down the way from Sychar towards Him, He exclaimed:

"You say, 'There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest.' I say, 'Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, they are already white unto harvest."

The Samaritans, stirred by what the woman had

told them about Jesus, began to press around Him, eager to hear what He said.

"Stay with us at Sychar," they begged Him, which was a wonderful thing for Samaritans to ask of a Jew. Jesus accepted their invitation. As He and His disciples walked with them to the town, they asked Him and His disciples many questions. Jesus stayed with them two whole days, teaching them about God and what God wanted them to be and do. When He left, many were sure He was indeed the Christ, and became His followers. They said to the woman, "Now we believe, not only because of your speaking, but we have heard for ourselves and we know that he is indeed the Saviour of the World."

That was a great harvest day.

Self-help Work: Make a booklet about the Samaritans, and keep a list of all the stories about them in the New Testament. The Samaritans had offered in the old days, about 520 B.C., to help the Jews in rebuilding the Temple at Jerusalem, but the Jews had refused contemptuously. The Samaritans were not Jews, but a mixed race that took the place of the Israelites when the Assyrians conquered the Kingdom of Israel (see Old Testament stories). The angry Samaritans built a temple of their own on the crest of Mount Gerizim.

They declared that there alone could the true God be rightly worshipped. Thus the two sides hated each other. Make a booklet about the Woman of Samaria. Choose your own title. Draw a well on the cover. Make a booklet about " Wells in the Bible."

One day you will read this story for yourself in the New Testament: John iv. 5–42. These notes on some of the difficult words may help you.

The 6th hour: this would be about noon. The Jewish day was reckoned from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. *Meat*, as always in the Bible, means " food." *Living water* to the Jews meant running water, or water from a spring, but St. John in his Gospel means " the Spirit " when he speaks of " living water." In the Old Testament God is spoken of as " the fountain of living waters," and also " the fountain of life."

Neither in this mountain nor *in Jerusalem:* by this Jesus means that rivalries will disappear when all people realise that God is a Spirit and needs no earthly dwelling-place. He can be worshipped everywhere.

" *In spirit* and in truth ": spirit represents the highest in man, akin to God Who is Spirit; to worship properly is to worship in harmony with Him Who is Truth, Righteousness and Love.

Copy in your Book of Verses the great words of

Jesus—John iv. 24. What sort of harvest was Jesus thinking of when He said, " Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, they are already white unto harvest " ?

" There are yet four months," etc., was perhaps a proverbial expression. Draw a map of Palestine to show the district of Galilee, Samaria and Judea, also the Jordan, Nazareth, Mount Gerizim, Jerusalem. Show the short way from Nazareth to Jerusalem, straight through Samaria, and the longer route down to the Jordan, along the Jordan up to Jericho and Jerusalem.

CHAPTER VIII

ANOTHER SABBATH DAY

CENTRAL THOUGHT: *A day is made holy by kind thoughts and deeds.*

One Sabbath day, Jesus and His friends were walking through the fields of golden corn near Capernaum. It was almost ready for reaping. There were no hedges or walls in the East to separate one man's field from another, and public paths went through the corn. Anyone walking through it was allowed to pick a few ears, for an old law said, " When thou comest unto the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand, but thou shalt *not* move a sickle into the corn."

As Peter and his companions listened to Jesus, they plucked some ears of wheat, rubbed them in the palms of their hands to get rid of the chaff and husks and eat the sweet grains.

Now, closely following them were some Pharisees in their fine robes, with fringes and tassels to show how important they were. When they saw what the disciples were doing, they hastened up to Jesus and said, " Why do you allow your disciples to do

REAPING

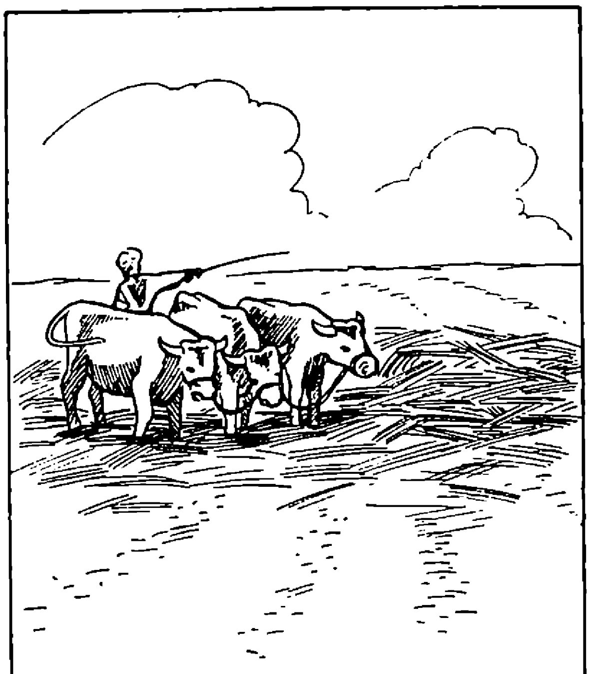
that which is not lawful on the Sabbath ? "

Peter looked very angry. They were not breaking the Law. For the Book of Deuteronomy specially said that as a man walked through a cornfield he could pull ears of it to eat. But the Law did forbid reaping and threshing on the Sabbath, and the Tradition of the Elders, with its hundreds of petty rules, declared that to pluck an ear of corn was a form of reaping, and to roll it in the palms a form of threshing. Thus the disciples could be blamed for breaking the Law.

Although Peter and his friends looked angry, Jesus answered patiently, " Did you never read what David did when he had need and was an hungered, he and they that were with him ? How he entered into the house of God and did eat the showbread [that is, the twelve loaves displayed in the Temple and renewed each Sabbath], which it is not lawful to eat save for the priests, and gave also to them that were with him ?

" Surely," Jesus added, " the Sabbath was made

for man, and not man for the Sabbath. The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."


THRESHING

The Pharisees did not know how to answer. David was their great King, and they could not think of him as a law-breaker. But they had made up their minds that Jesus encouraged law breaking and they must get rid of Him somehow.

Jesus and his friends continued on their way to the synagogue, and, entering it, they sat down to wait for the service to begin. You can picture this scene in the synagogue. There were many friendly faces, but there were some Pharisees with scowling faces.

Looking about Him, Jesus saw an unhappy-looking man with a limp, useless arm. His eyes filled with pity. The Pharisees watched more closely. They were sure Jesus was going to break the Sabbath rules again, and He was. " Stand forth ! " He said to the man with the withered arm. Then He turned to the Pharisees, for He knew what they were thinking. His voice rang out, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do

harm? To save life or to kill? Is the Sabbath intended for the good or ill of mankind?"

But the Pharisees did not answer. Jesus looked at them with anger and grief—anger for their sin, grief for the sinner; grief that these men so little understood that kindness, mercy and brotherhood were an important part of *true worship*. Then He turned to the crippled man, His face alive with love and strength. "Stretch forth your hand," He said, and the man felt his strength and courage returning. The thought came to him, "I can," and he raised his hand and stretched out his arm. It was soon well and strong like the other arm. Picture the healed man going home to spend the happiest Sabbath he had had for a long time, the people all rejoicing at what they had seen, and the Pharisees hurrying off to plot against Jesus and have Him arrested.

Two authorities had the right to arrest a man: the Roman Governors of the Provinces (Herod Antipas, governor of Galilee and Perea, and Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea and Samaria) and the Sanhedrin, the Great Council of the Jewish Church, which consisted of seventy-one members—Pharisees, priests, scribes, all well versed in the Law. It was a supreme court, and dealt with breaches of the Mosaic Law (the Pentateuch). It was never interfered with by the Romans, except that they

had taken from it the power to put anyone to death. Only the Roman Governor was able to sentence a man to death. The Pharisees therefore knew that they could not have Jesus put to death for breaking the Law, but the love and enthusiasm of the people for Jesus might be the means of His death. Many hot-headed Galileans were already talking of making Jesus king. If the Pharisees could get up a charge against Jesus of plotting to make Himself king and to destroy the Roman rule, then the Roman Governor would have Him put to death.

Self-help Work: Copy Mark ii. 27, 28. Copy the Fourth Commandment. Think of the kind of Sunday Jesus wants us to have. Make a list of the things He likes to see us doing and those He does not like to see us doing. Things He likes to see: children helping their mother so that she can rest, tending to the sick, taking the dog for a walk, looking after small brothers and sisters, enjoying if possible the beautiful sights and sounds of Nature and thanking God for them. Things He does not like to see us doing on Sunday: playing noisy games that disturb, quarrelling, being selfish and so on.

Make a booklet about how Jesus kept the Sabbath and how the Pharisees did. Here are some of the Sabbath rules the Pharisees kept: no washing, no

fires to be lit or put out, no water boiled, no cooking, no walk to be longer than a furlong, even to go to the synagogue, nothing to be carried from one house to another and so on. Make a little booklet about the story and call it, " A Walk through the Cornfields." Draw an ear of wheat or barley on the cover. Do the same for the story of the man with the withered hand. Think of a good title.

Words to think about and add to your Word Book : *sickle*, *chaff* and *husks*, *reaping*, *threshing*. *Threshing* was done by letting the oxen trample on the ears of corn, or by beating the ears with a flail, a wooden staff, at the end of which a short heavy stick hangs swinging. It is something like a " wooden " whip. Make a booklet about " The Harvest in Bible Days," and add notes and drawings to it from time to time. The word *Sanhedrin* is a Greek word meaning a sitting together, a meeting. In some versions of the Bible the word Council is used for Sanhedrin. It usually met in a hall in the Temple.

CHAPTER IX

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

CENTRAL THOUGHT: "*This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you.*"—John xv. 12.

Read again the story of the fishermen called from the lake-side (Chapter V). Jesus called another young fisherman who, like Andrew, bore a Greek name. He was called Philip, "Lover of Horses." It was Philip who found his friend Nathanael (also called Bartholomew) and brought him to Jesus.

When Jesus saw Nathanael He said, "Here is an Israelite in whom there is no guile." For He recognised at once the simple, true heart of the young man.

Nathanael was surprised that Jesus knew him. "Whence knowest thou me?" he asked, and Jesus answered, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig-tree I saw thee."

And Nathanael, pure of soul, knew his Lord at once. "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art King of Israel."

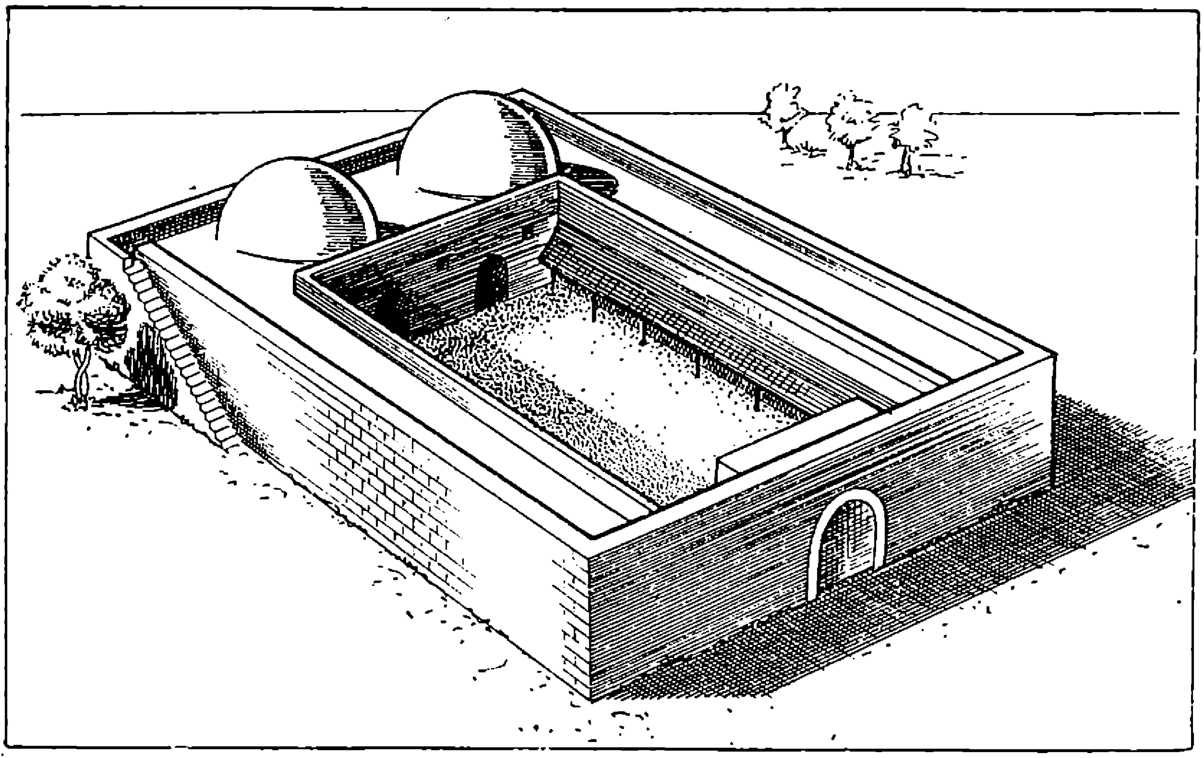
At the crossroads to Capernaum, where merchants came from Cæsarea on the coast with goods from

Greece and Rome, and from Damascus and far-away Persia and Egypt, Jesus saw Levi, whom later He called Matthew, meaning "gift of God." Levi was the chief collector of taxes at Capernaum. The Romans levied custom duties or taxes on all the goods that came into the city. You remember how the Romans used the money—to pay their soldiers who put down riots and disturbances, to build roads, walls, city gates, etc. Remember, too, that the Jews hated the tax-collectors, or publicans as they were called, although they were Jews like themselves, partly because the publicans were hard men who often extorted more money than necessary, and partly because the taxes were paid to Rome.

Levi was a rich man, but the words of Jesus made a great impression on him; they made him see that there was something more in life than money-making. So when one day Jesus went to him and spoke the words He had already spoken to Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John, saying, "Follow me," Levi at once left his money-making and followed Jesus, Who gave him the name of Matthew.

Matthew was so happy that he invited to his house his old friends to meet Jesus and His disciples, and made a feast for them. Many of his friends were tax-collectors and men who were not very particular about their way of life.

Some of the Pharisees who heard about this were



THE HOUSE OF LEVI, THE RICH TAX-COLLECTOR

angry. "Why does your Master eat with publicans and sinners?" they asked Peter and the other disciples. Peter told Jesus about their fault-finding, and He answered, "They that are whole have no need of a doctor, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous but the sinners."

Jesus had many other disciples or learners besides these. He now decided to choose twelve of them to be His special messengers or apostles. They were to share in all His activities and carry on His work when He had gone. He chose twelve in memory of the Twelve Tribes of Israel and to symbolise the mission of Jesus to His own people.

First he chose Simon Peter, warm-hearted but sometimes hasty, and his quieter brother Andrew,

thoughtful for others; John the beloved disciple, and his brother James, both eager and hot-headed, so that Jesus called them " Sons of Thunder "; Matthew who gave up money-making to answer the high call; Thomas who doubted but was so brave and loyal; Philip and his friend Bartholomew, James the Less, the Son of Alpheus; another Simon, Simon the Canaanite (this word should be Cananæan, which is not derived from Canaan, but from a word meaning " zealous "). Perhaps Simon was zealous, or he may have belonged to the Zealots, a party who wanted to overthrow the Roman rule; Judas Iscariot (perhaps " of Kerioth ") whose love of Jesus was spoilt by jealousy and love of money; Thaddeus or Jude, about whom we know nothing.

When Jesus sent them out on their first missionary journeys, He told them not to go to the Gentiles. They were not yet trained for telling the Good News to peoples of other nations and religions. The Jews, with their knowledge of the One True God (which no other nation then had), were better prepared to receive the Good News of the Kingdom of God. He warned them of hardships and dangers, but He added that God would watch over them. He sent them in all directions in twos, Simon Peter and Andrew, the brothers, went one way; the other brothers, James and John, another way. Philip had Nathanaël as his companion, and

Matthew went with Thomas. The other James, son of Alpheus, went with Jude (also called Lebbeus Thaddeus); and Judas Iscariot with the other Simon known for his ardent desire to free the Jews from the rule of the Romans.

When they returned from their journey you may be sure that they had much to tell Jesus and many difficulties about which to ask His advice. The greatest lesson perhaps Jesus taught His messengers or apostles was "to love one another." "By this sign shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another."

Remember, the apostles were not ignorant men. They knew Greek and were able to preach in that language. Matthew wrote the Gospel that bears his name, and John was responsible for the Gospel of St. John, with its glorious verses about love. Peter wrote a letter and epistle to the early Christian Church (1 Peter), one of the most beautiful writings of the New Testament.

Self-help Work: This simple rhyme will help you to remember the names of the Twelve Apostles and the three groups in which they are usually found:

"Peter and Andrew, James and John, fishermen of Capernaum—
Thomas and St. Matthew too—Philip and Bartholomew—

James the Less, and Jude the brave, Simon the Zealous, and Judas the knave."

Make a booklet about the Twelve Apostles. One page will do for James the Less and Jude or Thaddeus. Have one page at least for each of the other Apostles. You will find it very interesting to add notes to these pages when you find out more about one or other of the Apostles. Look out for verses that tell when Andrew was thoughtful for others: he brought his brother Simon to Jesus, he helped the Greeks who wanted to meet Jesus; he was the first to find some food for the feeding of the five thousand (Mark vi. 30–4). If you collect verses mentioning the Apostles, it is surprising what you can learn about them. You will find when Thomas was brave and when he doubted. In *Heroes of Christianity* you will read how St. Andrew became the patron saint of Scotland.

Verses to copy in your Book of Verses and learn by heart: John xv. 12–17. Make a booklet about St. Matthew, tell about his work, his call, the feast he gave. Add any difficult words to your Word Book. Be sure you have *publican*, a tax-collector, publican is from a Latin word—*populus*—meaning people. A *publican* was a man engaged in affairs that concerned people and the welfare of people. *Apostle* is another important word, a Greek word meaning one who is sent forth.

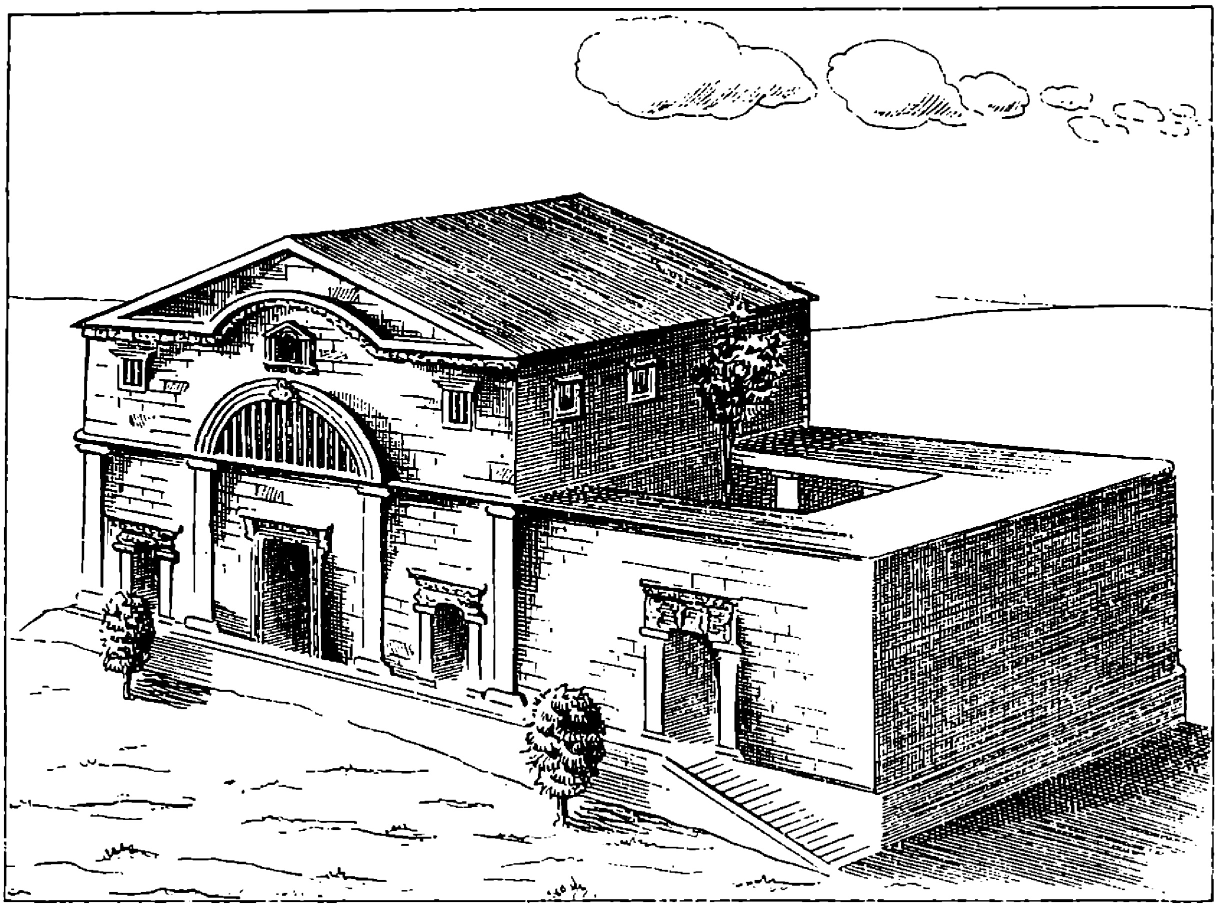
CHAPTER X

THE CENTURION'S SLAVE

CENTRAL THOUGHT: "*I cry unto the Lord with my voice, and He answers me out of His holy hill.*"—Psalm iii. 4.

In Capernaum there lived a Roman officer, a centurion, who had charge of a hundred soldiers. He was a rich man, and lived in a fine, large house with many rooms built round a pleasant court or garden. His soldiers and servants loved him because he treated them kindly. One day he was much distressed because his favourite servant, a slave, was very ill and the doctors could not cure him. The centurion wondered how he could save his life. He had heard stories of Jesus and His power, but how could he get in touch with Him? He was a Gentile and Jesus was a Jew.

The centurion, like many of the wiser Greeks and Romans, had given up believing in the many old gods—Jupiter, the chief god; Mars, the god of war; Venus, the goddess of love, and others. Like the Jews, he believed there was one unseen God Who had created the world and all in it. Because of this belief, he had built for the Jews the fine



THE SYNAGOGUE BUILT BY THE CENTURION

synagogue where they worshipped God (see picture).

In his need he thought of the Elders of the synagogue. They might speak to Jesus for him. Hurriedly he called on them, and they willingly agreed to speak to Jesus and ask His help.

Jesus had just come down from preaching on the hill when the Elders rushed up to Him. " There is a centurion," they said, " whose favourite slave is very ill; indeed, he is on the point of death. Will you help him? He is worthy that you should do this for him, for he loves our nation and himself built us our synagogue." Jesus at once set off with

them to the centurion's house.

In the meantime, the anxious centurion was watching by his slave and thinking. Then he had an idea. He knew from stories told him that Jesus had some wonderful power over men's lives and bodies—that He could command this power to restore health and happiness to men. " Just as my soldiers obey me," thought the centurion, " and I control their movements, so Jesus can use His power. It will be enough if Jesus gives the word of command." Such was the centurion's faith that he sent his friends to meet Jesus with this message: " Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under myself soldiers; and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it."

CENTURION

Jesus was filled with joy and surprise at these words. A Roman, a military officer, had this complete faith in Him, faith much greater than He had seen among the Jews themselves. He turned to the crowd of Jews who had been following him, " Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Then Jesus thought of the great Roman Empire that stretched east and west, north and south across the world, and saw many more Gentiles believing in Him. " They shall come," He cried, " from the east and the west, and from the north and south, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of God."

Then He turned to the centurion's friends who were waiting, saying, " Go thy way; as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." They hurried back to the centurion's house and found everyone happy. The slave was up and well.

But many of the Jews were not pleased with what Jesus had said. They wanted no Gentiles in the Kingdom of God. It was to be their Kingdom only.

There must have been many Gentiles like the centurion, who never met Jesus personally, but believed in Him and became Christians.

Self-help Work: Look for pictures of Roman soldiers and read all you can about Rome and

Roman soldiers. Draw a picture of a Roman centurion; print Ps. iii. 4 underneath. Begin to collect references to the Roman army and Roman soldiers in the New Testament. Soldiers, you remember, came to be baptised by John the Baptist (Luke iii. 14). Make a booklet about the story of the centurion and his slave. Very often a Roman was so fond of his slave that he would adopt him into his family as a son.

This story is told by both St. Matthew and St. Luke. St. Matthew makes the centurion come to Jesus in person instead of sending two sets of messengers. Some think St. Luke told the story as you have read it to make the centurion a symbol of Christians who never met Jesus personally but believed in Him. It is interesting to compare the two stories. St. Luke vii. 1–10 with St. Matt. viii. 5–13. Which story do you like better?

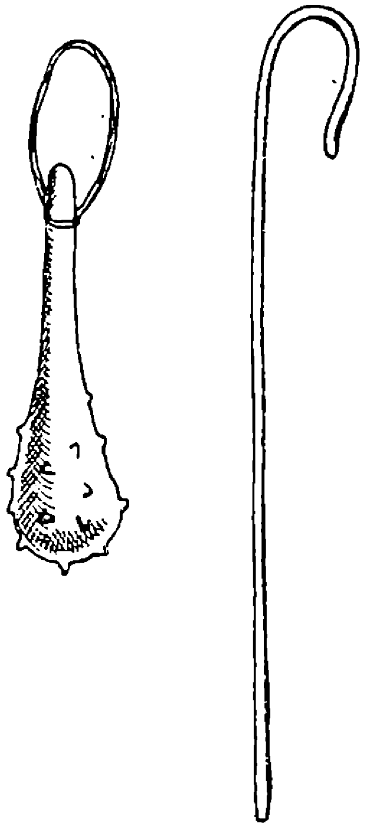
Add the word *centurion* to your Word Book. *Century* is a Latin word for a company in an army, generally a hundred men. A centurion was commander of a century in the Roman army (*century*, from *centum*, a hundred). Copy the picture of the synagogue and write the story about it.

CHAPTER XI

STORIES JESUS TOLD: THE LOST FOUND

CENTRAL THOUGHT: "*The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.*"—Psalm xxiii.

Among the people who came to listen to Jesus were many publicans and sinners, anxious to be better men and women. Jesus often spoke to them and took meals with them. The Pharisees and Scribes were very angry at this. They complained bitterly, "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them."

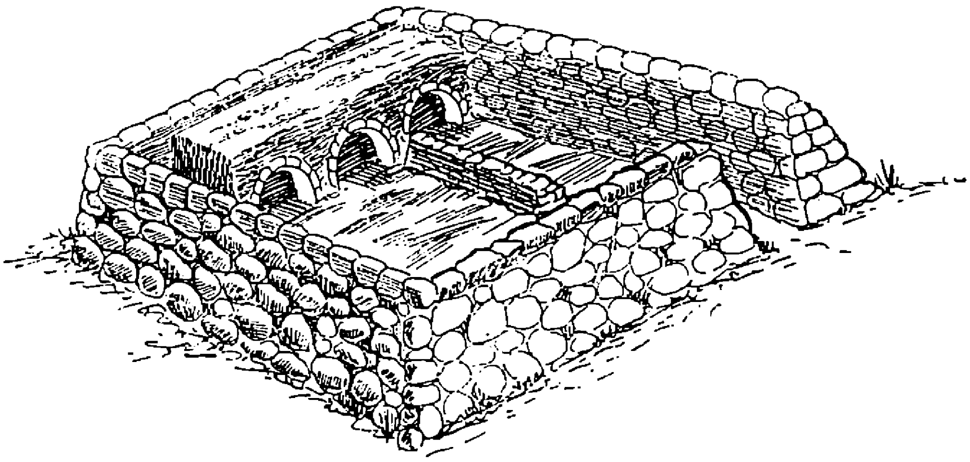


A ROD AND STAFF

One day, when a great crowd had gathered around Jesus, He told stories to comfort the sinners and outcasts, and to make the Pharisees feel a little ashamed of themselves.

One story was about a shepherd. Jesus knew all about shepherd life, for He had often watched them with their flocks on the hillsides round Nazareth when He was a boy. He knew their rod—the thick wooden or

iron club with which to fight wild animals—and their long staff or shepherd's crook for guiding the sheep. He knew how faithfully the shepherds looked after their sheep, watching them in case they should stray, and calling them back from dangerous places. All the sheep knew their master's voice, and would come to him when he called. When his sheep were thirsty he led them



A SHEEP-FOLD

to a pool, a well with its deep, still waters. He found and prepared new pastures for them by uprooting poisonous plants and blocking up vipers' holes. Sometimes the way to new pastures was dangerous, because of precipices or streams or wild beasts, but the shepherd always went first, leading his sheep along the best tracks, and turning often to see that they followed. At night he led the sheep into the fold. He stood at the narrow entrance, and let them pass in one by one, so that he could count them

carefully and see that they were all safe and sound. If one were lost, he did not rest until he found it.

This was the story Jesus told about a shepherd.

The Lost Sheep

"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and his neighbours, saying unto them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.'"

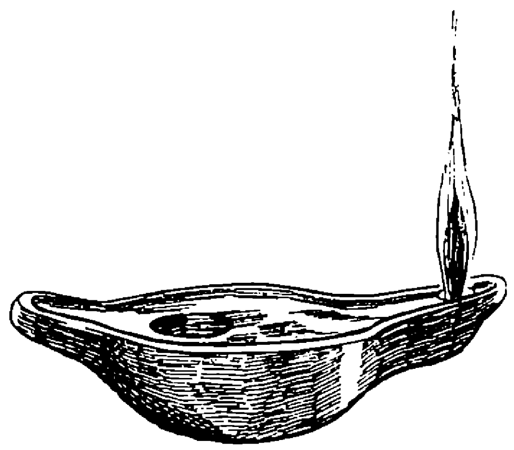
Some people think that this was the most beautiful story our Lord ever told. In the story it is not meant that the ninety-nine sheep were neglected; the story is concerned with the lost sheep and the seeking shepherd, with the unwearying search of Christ for the sinner. The shepherd's love is shown by the persistence of his search ("*until he find it*"), the tenderness of his treatment ("*he layeth it on his shoulders*"), his joy at finding it.

We can imagine how quiet it was when Jesus had finished His story. Many understood what He meant, and saw in the shepherd Christ searching for the sinner and making no distinction between

the self-righteous Pharisees and the outcast publicans and sinners.

His next story was about something He had seen one day at Nazareth when He was a boy. He saw through the doorway of a cottage (see Chapter I) a woman sweeping with her broom. She had lit her lamp and put it on the lampstand. Every now and then she put down her brush and searched among the bits she had swept up, and in the holes and corners. As her little cottage had no window, she could not hope to find anything without her lamp. She was very unhappy because she had lost a silver coin, one of the ten coins she wore on a string across her forehead under her veil. She could not rest until she had searched everywhere for it. There were many places to look, for the floor was made of earth and stone, and it could easily have slipped into a crack; but she never gave up. She searched diligently until she found it. And when she had found it, she called together her friends and neighbours, saying, " Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I lost."

Many of those who listened knew what Jesus meant. We all want to find our lost possessions.



A LAMP

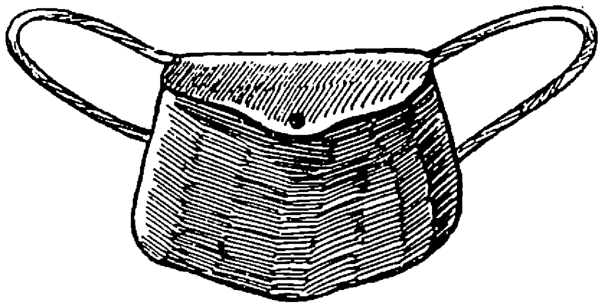
How much more, therefore, does God care for and want to find any of His children who are lost?

When Jesus finished his story, He said to the listening people and the poor sinners standing at the back: " Even so is there joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who is sorry for his sins."

SELF-HELP WORK: Divide yourselves up into groups. Let each group read from the Bible one of the stories in chorus, but one child chosen by each group says the last words, " Rejoice with me, etc." See which group reads the best. The last words must ring out.

Draw an Eastern sheep-fold and the " rod " and " staff " of the shepherd. Make a booklet about shepherd life. You have learnt about shepherds in your Old Testament stories, so you can put all your knowledge together. Perhaps you remember the wells, drinking troughs, the scrip or bag in which the shepherd carried his food and his sling. Some of you may like to make booklets in which to copy the various verses about shepherds that you find in the New Testament.

The stories Jesus told were called *parables*; they were stories with *a meaning*. Children who listened to His stories enjoyed the story, but older people saw the deeper meaning. "By a parable spake he


A SCRIP IN WHICH THE SHEPHERD CARRIED HIS FOOD

unto them." He taught the people by *telling them stories*, stories about the men and women and the things they saw around them every day, stories about kings, farmers, merchants, labourers, judges, tax-gatherers, fishermen, shepherds, fish, birds—but you yourselves make a list of all the people and things Jesus told stories about—short stories—some very short—and long stories. You will find your list interesting, and you will be able to use it in many ways.

Buy an exercise-book in which to copy the parables you like best. Make a pretty cover for it. Be sure to copy the story of the " Lost Sheep " and the " Lost Coin." Copy them in the words of the Bible. Make drawings for the stories.

Add some notes and drawings to your booklet about " A Peasant's House in Nazareth " (Chapter I). Draw pictures of a lamp, a lampstand, a broom, etc., for it.

Read and learn some verses of Ps. xxiii, " The Lord is my Shepherd." The lesson of the psalm is serene faith in the care of God throughout the adventures of life. These adventures are pictured as those of a shepherd who has to face wild beasts

and be continually moving to new pastures which were often scanty, but "God will always provide."

"*The still waters*" means the waters of resting-places, the wells and pools where shepherd and sheep rest.

"*For His name's sake*," because of what God is, because of His righteousness, He will do this.

Add interesting words to your Word Book, *parable*, *pasture*, *shepherd's rod*, meaning the iron or wooden club studded with nails with which wild animals were fought. Draw pictures to illustrate the words, where possible.

CHAPTER XII

THE POOL OF BETHESDA

CENTRAL THOUGHT: *In the time of need, Jesus is standing by.*

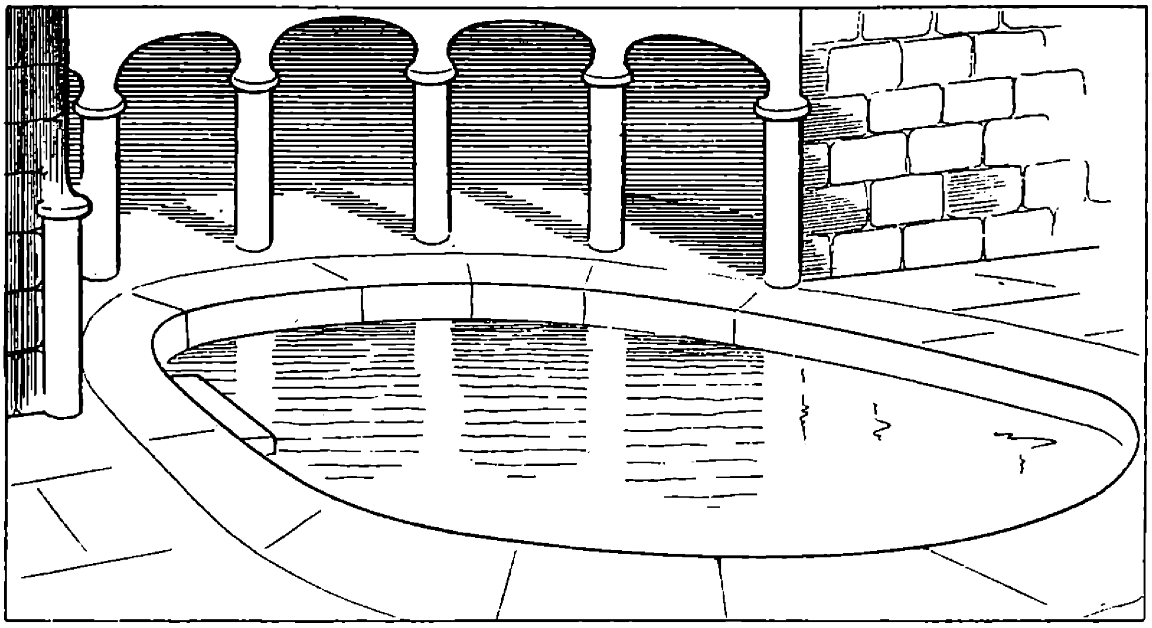
There are places in England and other countries where springs bubble up out of the ground; the water from these springs is often good for certain diseases, such as rheumatism, because of the minerals it contains. Perhaps you have heard of some of these famous springs; they are found at Bath, Harrogate, Buxton, Tunbridge Wells and other places in the British Isles. Then there are the famous thermal springs of New Zealand and other parts of the world.

The use of medicinal springs was well known in the ancient world, and in the time of Christ there was such a spring in Jerusalem, near the Sheep Gate, called the Pool of Bethesda. Bethesda has the beautiful meaning of "house of mercy," and indeed the wells are merciful gifts from God.

The Pool of Bethesda was an intermittent spring, and every now and again water came bubbling up through the pool. Five stone porches had been built around it, where the invalids could lie or sit

waiting for the pool to bubble. Remains of these arches can be seen to-day. There was a popular idea that an angel caused the water to bubble, and only the first to enter could be cured. Because of this belief, there was always a scramble among the sick people to be the first to step into the water.

At the time of a festival, what festival the Bible does not say, our Lord went up to Jerusalem and made His way one Sabbath to the pool with its five porches and invalids. Among them was a man who had been crippled for thirty-eight years. He could only walk slowly a few steps at a time. He was indifferent as to whether he got well or not. He just lay there and made no effort. Jesus looked at this man, and saw that he had not always been good. He had been selfish and done many wrong things, and now he was sick in mind and body and without hope. Jesus knew at once that this was the man who most needed help; He began by quickening his hope. "Do you *want* to be well again?" He asked. The man made an excuse for his indifference by saying, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me." Then Jesus gave the man three commands, and he responded by throwing off the paralysis of *will* and of limbs. These were the three commands: "*Arise.*" The cripple made a real



THE POOL OF BETHESDA

effort and stood up. " *Take up thy bed.*" He stooped down and found his arms were strong enough to pick up his bed, a light mattress, roll it up and put it on his shoulder. Then came the third command, " *Walk.*"

How glad the man felt as he began to walk about. Many people were standing round watching him, so that when he looked for his wonderful Healer to thank Him, he could not see Him anywhere. Jesus had slipped quietly away.

As the man prepared to go happily home carrying his " bed," some of the Pharisees stopped him, and said, " It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed." But the man was far too happy to care what they said. He had done what the wonderful Healer had said, and he knew that could not be wrong. So he replied, " He that made

me whole, the same said unto me, 'Take up thy bed and walk.'" They asked him who it was that had healed him, but he did not know. However, as he walked home, he must have thought much about what had happened. The more he thought, the more sure he was that the Healer came from God. So he went to the Temple, and in the courts of the Temple he met Jesus. Jesus had something to say to him. He knew that now the man was well he might do wrong again as he had done so many years ago. He must warn him. So He spoke to him firmly and kindly, "You are cured now. Do not sin again, lest something worse befall you." Like a true physician, Jesus goes to the root of the trouble and tries to prevent its recurrence.

As we read this story, we seem to see a picture of men and women helpless, suffering, *indifferent* to their state, and the Christ standing by, patiently standing by, ready to help, attracting indeed responsive souls but getting no notice from the crowd.

This miracle differs from other miracles in that the man did not ask Christ to help him. Look out for any other miracles like this.

SELF-HELP WORK: Read John v. 1–9. Notice how concisely and effectively the tale is told.

Beds in Palestine were more like mats. They

were stretched on the floor at night, and in the day-time rolled up and stood in a recess in the wall. Add notes on beds to your booklet on " A House in Palestine " (see Chapter I).

Make a booklet about the Pool of Bethesda and what happened there, or tell the story of the cure as the sick man may have told it to a friend. Draw a picture of what you think the pool was like (see picture). Those who were cured by bathing in the pool and the man who was cured by the command of Jesus were all cured by God.

Begin to make a list of stories about Jesus and sick people. Add a few notes about each story.

Add notes on interesting words, and new words and words difficult to spell, to your Word Book ; examples, *rheumatism*, *medicinal*, *intermittent*, *festival*. Add the word *Bethesda* to your booklet of Proper Names and their meanings.

CHAPTER XIII

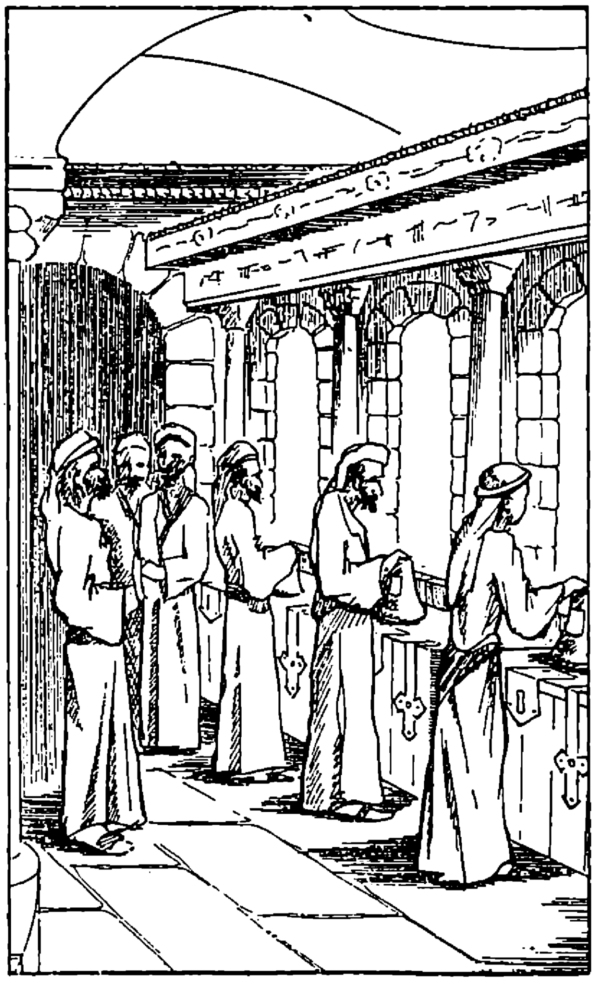
THE WIDOW'S MITE

CENTRAL THOUGHT: *Love turns a gift to gold.*

Think again of the story of the first visit of Jesus to the Temple (Chapter III). Jesus ŏften went to the Temple with Peter and John and the other disciples. Hėre He taught or listened to the Levites singing.

One day, weary of arguments with the hard-hearted Scribes and Pharisees, Jesus sat down in the Court of the Women to rest. This court, you remember, was so called because, although men and women could enter it, no woman could go beyond it into the next court. The next court was the Court of the Men or the Court of Israel. In this court were the altar and the Holy Place, and parts were set aside for the Levites and the Priests. Here sacrifices were offered to God.

In the Court of the Women were the offertory boxes. They were big chests standing by the wall, on the top of each was a trumpet-shaped opening. The small end was uppermost, and it was into this small end that the people put their gifts. There were thirteen of these "Trumpets"; some "Trum-


THE OFFERTORY BOXES

pets" were for the half-shekels that every pilgrim to the Temple had to pay, some were for thanksgiving offerings. People who had something to be glad about thanked God by giving a gift to His Temple. Some of the money was used for keeping the Temple clean and beautiful; some for buying olive-oil to keep the great lamps burning; there were four very large lampstands in the Court of the Women. Then the Priests and the Levites had to be paid and so on. On the boxes were words that told for what purpose the money was to be used.

Jesus sat on a marble bench just opposite the row of "Trumpets," and near Him stood Peter and some of the other disciples. From where they were, they could see all the different people coming with their gifts: a merchant in a silk cloak threw in a handful of silver with a clatter, as if he wanted everyone to know how well off he was; a rich man in a handsome striped coat put in a handful of gold

coins, first looking around as if to say, " See what a lot of money I give "; a Pharisee in a long robe with fringed borders took care that no one should come near him. He did not want to be touched by a publican or a sinner, but he put in his money that all should see how much he was giving. Jesus looked sad as he watched them. Then a poor woman came along. Jesus knew she was poor and a widow by her dark, shabby clothes that had been mended many times. In her hand she carried two tiny copper coins. These lepta, or mites, were together less in value than an English half-penny. They were all she had, for she was very poor. She gladly dropped them in the " Trumpet," because she wanted to please God. Perhaps the people who saw her thought, " What is the use of so small a gift ? " " See," said Jesus to His disciples, " that poor woman gave more than anyone else." His disciples must have looked puzzled, for Jesus went on: " The people who have given much still have much left. They will not miss what they have given away. But that poor woman *gladly* gave all she had: it was a gift of love." The disciples now understood what Jesus meant—the poor woman had given more than anyone else because she had not given for show but because she had love in her heart. Hers was the best gift of all. The woman little thought, as she went to her poor home, that

the story of her gift would be remembered for all time and told to countless children. She did not know that Jesus was watching her, poor and humble as she was.

SELF-HELP WORK: Draw a picture of the trumpet-shaped money-boxes. Print in under the words of Jesus, Mark xii. 43–4. Make a booklet about the story of the Widow's Mite. Find a new title for it, perhaps " The Gift that Pleased Jesus." Tell about any deed you have seen or read about that you think should be remembered. Begin to make a booklet about " Gifts that Please Jesus."

Draw a plan of the Temple Court, and show where the " Trumpets " or money-boxes were (see Chapter III and the plan of the Temple).

Copy the last sentence of the story. What lesson does it teach us ? Add new words to your Word Book: *mite*, a modest contribution, the best one can do; *offertory*, gifts offered. You may like to collect, on one page of your book, the coins mentioned in the New Testament. How many do you know already ?

CHAPTER XIV

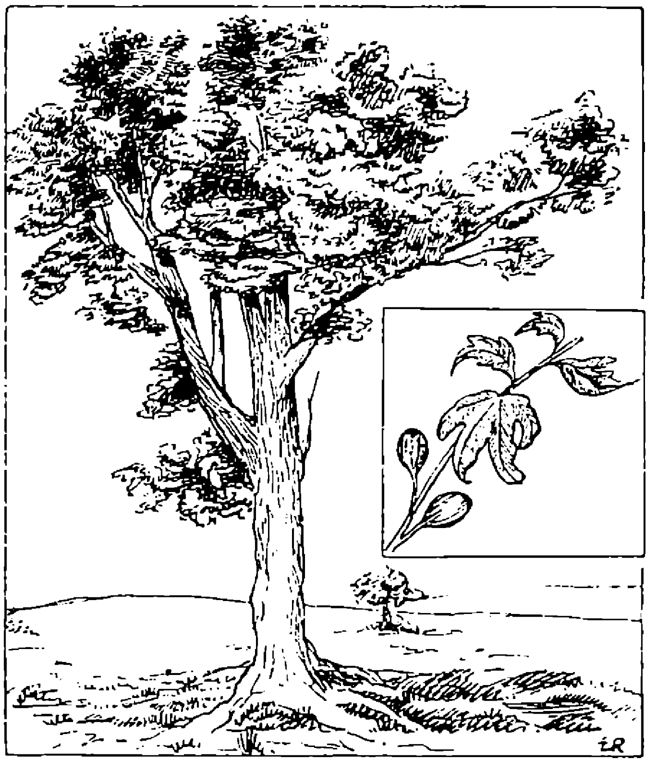
ZACCHEUS THE SINNER

CENTRAL THOUGHT: "*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.*"—Luke xix. 10.

It was springtime, and the roads were crowded with pilgrims going up to Jerusalem to keep the Passover feast. Jesus, with His twelve disciples, was going too. Many people followed Jesus, and many waited by the roadside to see Him pass, because they had heard about Him and the wonderful things He had done. Numbers of those who followed Him believed He was going to Jerusalem to declare Himself King and end the rule of the Romans.

As Jesus came near Jericho with its groves of feathery palms, the people began to come out of their houses in hopes of seeing Him. Perhaps the man who most wanted to see Him was Zaccheus, a rich man who lived in a large house in Jericho. He had become rich because he was the chief tax-collector. He had so much to do that he gave lesser officials the work of collecting taxes for him, with the result that the people were forced to pay larger sums than were justly due.

Zaccheus was specially anxious to see Jesus, because he knew the Pharisees condemned Him as the friend of publicans and sinners. He also knew that Matthew, a rich tax-collector, in Capernaum, had given up his position and wealth to become a follower of Jesus.



A SYCOMORE- OR FIG-TREE

He wondered how he could see Jesus, because there would be crowds in the streets, and he was a short man; moreover, no one would be likely to help him, because he was a hated tax-collector. However, he thought of a plan. He got nimbly ahead of the crowd and hoisted himself up among the branches of a wayside sycomore-tree. (This tree was not our *sycamore*, but a kind of fig-tree with low-spreading branches.) No one now could stand in front of him.

The crowd came along, Jesus leading the way. Soon He would pass. But—no—Jesus had stopped. Jesus was calling him whom all men despised.

"Zaccheus," called the clear, strong voice, "make

haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house."

Zaccheus scrambled joyfully down the tree. Jesus wanted him for a friend. As he led the way to his house, he heard the people muttering, " He is to lodge with a man who is a sinner." And Zaccheus knew what they said was true. He was a sinner, though this thought had never troubled him until he heard the voice of Jesus. Now he felt he must do something to make amends. So, as they entered the courtyard of his house, he said in a voice for all to hear, " Behold, Lord, the half of my riches I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore it fourfold."

Jesus was full of joy. " To-day is salvation come to this house. For as much as he also is a son of Abraham." Jesus meant by this that though Zaccheus was an outcast publican, he was still a Jew and Jesus cared for him. Then He added words that He had said long before, when the Pharisees tried to drive the publicans (tax-collectors) and sinners away from Him, " The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost."

That night Jesus stayed in the house of Zaccheus, and the next morning went on His way to Jerusalem. In the coming chapter you will read about an event that took place as Jesus was leaving Jericho.

SELF-HELP WORK: Revise the story of Matthew (Chapter IX). Read again about the Romans who ruled Palestine.

Make a booklet about Zaccheus the tax-collector. How does the story show the power of Jesus? Zaccheus had everything to keep him from repentance: a high position (chief publican), wealth, hardness of heart. His heart had become hard because of his unpopularity. No one wanted him until Jesus called him. The influence or power of that call changed his whole life. Copy a verse from Luke xix. 1–10 that shows the practical form of Zaccheus' repentance, and one that tells concisely the redeeming purpose of the mission of Jesus (verse 10).

Does the story remind you of the parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin? Why? Make a booklet for the names of plants and flowers mentioned in the New Testament. Add sycomore-tree, carob- or locust-tree.

CHAPTER XV

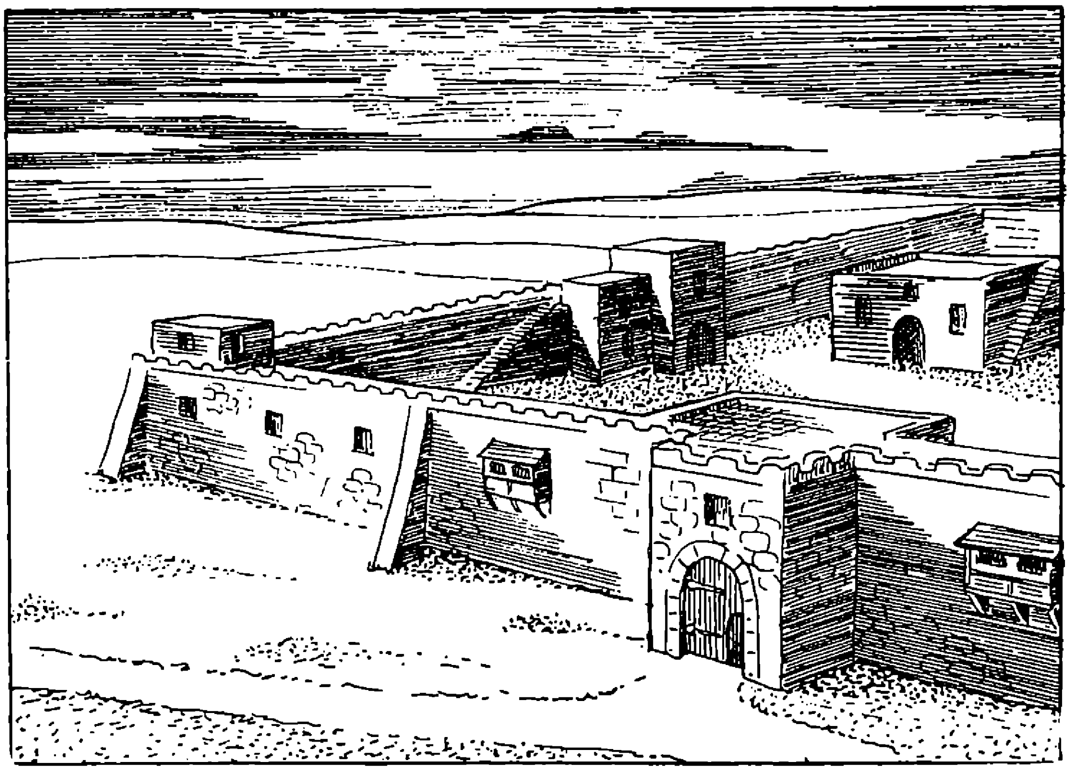
BLIND BARTIMEUS

CENTRAL THOUGHT: "*Jesus calls, be of good cheer.*"—Mark x. 49.

There lived in Jericho a blind man called Bartimeus (Bar-Timeus, son of Timeus; *bar* means *son*). Jericho was a fine city, partly Greek and partly Roman—a Græco-Roman city. It had been rebuilt by Herod the Great, and had a palace-citadel, a theatre and other Roman buildings. It was shaded by palm-trees, and outside its walls were fruit-trees and fields of wheat and barley, but Bartimeus could see none of these lovely things, and he could not work or earn any money.

Every day he used to sit by the roadside outside the city gates and beg from passers-by. In those days it was no disgrace for a blind man or cripple who could not work to beg. It was their only way of making a living. Many people passed through Jericho on their way to Jerusalem, especially at the time of the Passover (see Chapter III).

On the morning when Jesus was leaving Jericho after His stay with Zaccheus, Bartimeus was sitting by the roadside outside the gates. He knew that



A WALLED TOWN IN PALESTINE WITH THE GATE CLOSED

many people would be passing. He listened carefully to the footsteps and often called out, " I am blind. Have pity on me." He had heard about Jesus, and he wished he could speak to Him. But, alas, he could not see Him. Soon he heard the sound of more footsteps than usual and excited voices. How he longed to see who was passing and what was happening. He called out, " What is it ? Who is coming ? "

" Jesus of Nazareth is passing by," they told him.

Bartimeus stood up and shouted as loud as he could, " Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." Supposing Jesus did not hear him ? How sad it would be to lose this chance. " Be quiet, hold your peace," said many of those around him.

But Bartimeus continued to shout, "Jesus, have mercy on me."

"Call him to me," cried Jesus, standing and waiting. There was a hush.

"He calleth to thee, be of good cheer," cried the people round the blind man. So eager was Bartimeus that he threw away his cloak, sprang up, and ran to Jesus, guided by willing hands. In a moment he heard the voice of Jesus—he knew it at once. It was like no other voice.

"What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" asked Jesus.

"Rabboni," he replied, using a word of deep reverence, "that I may receive my sight."

"Go thy way," said Jesus, "thy faith hath made thee whole."

At that very moment blind Bartimeus could see —the face of Jesus, the people round, the walls of Jericho, the palm-trees, the blue sky. He jumped for joy. He praised God, as did all the people round. But he did not go his way, he followed Jesus. He followed Jesus all the long uphill road to Jerusalem, some nineteen miles; he followed Him in the years to come, for he had found an everlasting Friend.

Self-help Work: Discuss why it is wrong to beg to-day, and how blind people are helped to-day,

as in St. Dunstan's, for example. Think out the best gifts for blind people: a Braille book, sweet-scented flowers, fruit, etc. Collect pennies to help to buy a Braille book for the blind.

Make a booklet about Bartimeus ; draw palm-trees and a city gate on the cover (see picture). Draw a sketch-map to show the road climbing up from Jericho to Jerusalem. Make a booklet about Jericho. Say what you know of Jericho in Old Testament days. Remember, it was a very different city in the days when Joshua conquered it: it had no fine Roman buildings. It is a very different city, too, to-day. You may like to make a class book about Jericho. Try to find pictures of it to-day. Keep a record of all the events that happened in or near it in our Lord's time.

Make a booklet about towns in Palestine in the days of Jesus—Capernaum, Nazareth, Cæsarea, Bethsaida, etc. Say exactly where each is.

Say or read together some of the psalms sung by pilgrims on their way up to Jerusalem (Chapter III).

Look for words to add to your Word Book ; example, *Græco-Roman*, partly Greek and partly Roman.

Notice the spelling of *Zaccheus* and *Bartimeus* ; these names can also be spelt *Zacchæus* and *Bartimæus*, because æ = e. Choose which spelling you like.

CHAPTER XVI

THE STORM ON THE LAKE

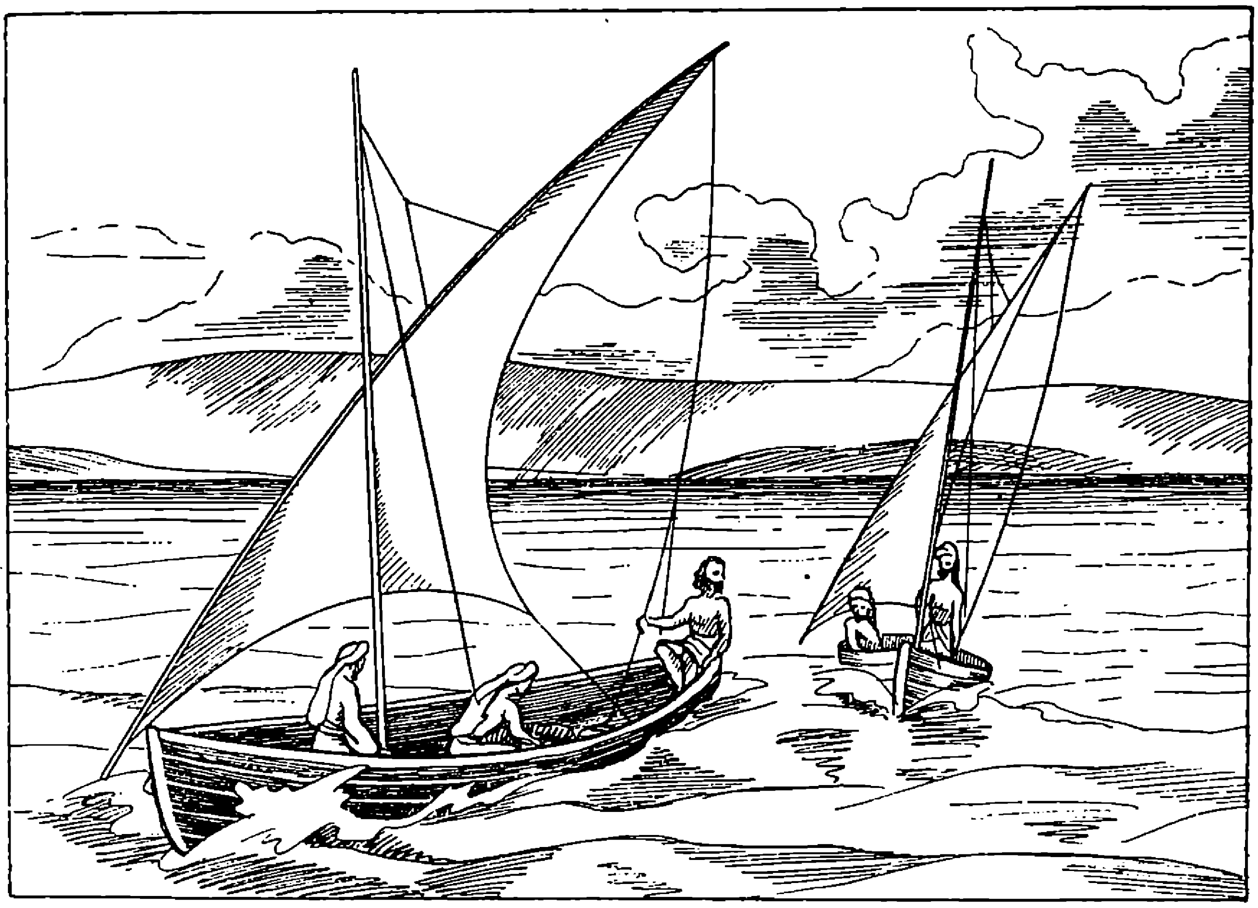
CENTRAL THOUGHT: "*In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.*"—Isaiah xxx. 16.

Jesus had spent two very long days healing the sick and teaching by wise words and stories. Crowds always followed Him and pressed about Him, for Capernaum was a busy place, with many fishermen, boat-builders and workers of all kinds, as well as merchants coming and going.

Jesus felt the need for a quiet time, so when evening came He said to His disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Peter, James and John knew exactly what He meant. Across the north end of the lake, on its eastern shore, it was easy to find solitude and silence among the hills.

Peter and his friends soon got the boat ready. A cushion was placed for the Master's head, so that He might rest, and they pushed off from the shore.

The sun sank in the west, the stars came out, and as the people went home silence fell over the land. The shores of Capernaum were left behind, and in peace and quietness Jesus lay down in the stern and slept.



GALILEAN FISHING-BOATS

Peter and his friends attended to the boat and kept watch. They talked in whispers. Suddenly Peter looked to the north; the whistling of the wind down the northern valley was clearly heard.

" Look out, a storm is coming," he cried.

Storms on the lake are very sudden and violent, but they do not last long. They are caused by the hot air rising from the deep valley, in which are the lake and the River Jordan; the cold air sweeps down in a great gust from the snow-capped sides of Mount Hermon in the north to take its place.

The boat rocked as the wind whipped the sea into wild billows that swept over her bow. The

disciples began to bail out the water. The storm grew more fierce, the boat heeled over before the wind. Was it going to capsize? Peter, Andrew, James and John anxiously looked about. Brave fishermen as they were, fear clutched at their hearts. To their surprise Jesus still slept. Would He be frightened if He were awake? "Master, Master," they cried, "carest thou not that we perish?"

Instantly Jesus awoke. The storm had not awakened Him, but that cry of fear from His friends reached Him. He looked surprised, not at the storm on the lake, but at the storm of fear in the hearts of His disciples. Standing up, He stretched out His hand, saying to the fierce wind, "Peace," and to the angry waves, "Be still."

Instantly there was a great calm; the storm of fear in the hearts of the disciples was over. Then Jesus turned to them.

"Why are ye fearful: have ye not yet faith?" He asked.

The disciples looked at each other and then at the strong, kind face of Jesus, their Master. Of course they need not have been afraid. No storms, no dangers—not even death itself, can harm any of God's children. Jesus was their Friend, and they could always turn to Him for comfort and courage.

The little boat went on its way to the other side,

and the disciples marvelled greatly that even the winds and the sea seemed to obey Jesus.

SELF-HELP WORK: Draw a picture of a storm at sea. Print underneath the words of Jesus (Mark iv. 39). Make a drawing of a Galilean fishing-boat, a broad boat with a red or brown triangular sail. The sails are wide at the bottom, and taper off to a point at the top, so that the boat is less likely to be overturned by a sudden squall of wind. The "cushion" in the boat was a hard leather roll that formed the steersman's seat. A "cushion" or "pillow" in the East was more in the nature of a support for the neck than something soft to rest the head on.

Draw a map of the Lake of Galilee. Show the River Jordan and Mount Hermon away to the north, and towns on the shores of the lake. The disciples probably rowed or sailed the boat from Capernaum to somewhere near Gergesa. Make a booklet for the story, "The Stilling of the Storm." Choose your own title. Collect stories in which the sea and fishermen play a part. There is one long poem in the Bible about the sea (Ps. cviii. 23–31). Copy some verses in your Book of Bible Verses. Learn some verses by heart, perhaps verses 29 and 30.

CHAPTER XVII

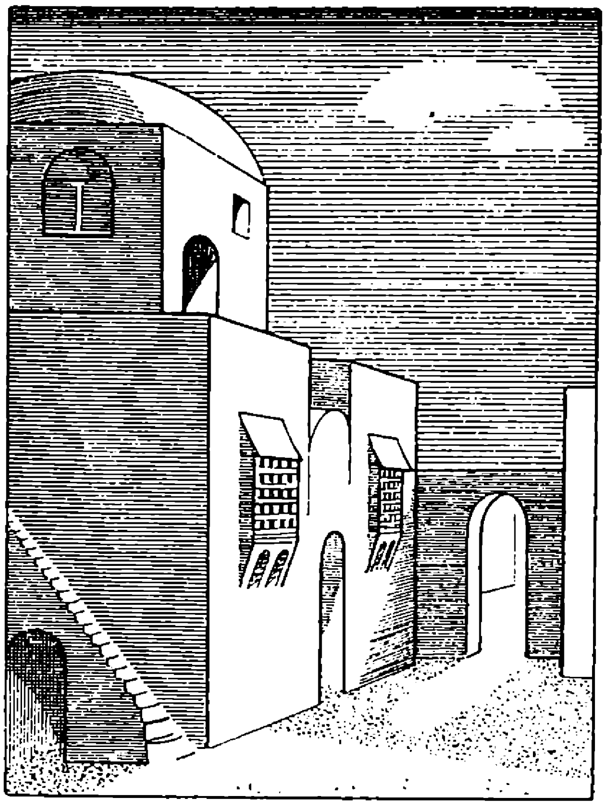
THE RULER'S LITTLE DAUGHTER

CENTRAL THOUGHT: "*O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever.*"—Psalm cxviii. 1.

Picture the home of a wealthy Jew in Capernaum—many rooms built around a central courtyard, with a beautiful fountain and a verandah at the farther end; there was, too, an upper room. Here Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, lived.

He had a little daughter of twelve whom he dearly loved, but at the time the story begins she was very ill. Although her father was rich, he could find no doctor to cure her. Then he thought of Jesus, Whom he had often seen in the streets and the synagogue, where he had more than once called on Him to read and speak. Jesus had cured many people, so Jairus made up his mind he would go to Jesus for help.

He left his house and hurried down the street, asking everyone if they had seen Jesus. He went to Peter's house where Jesus often stayed, but He was not there. Then someone told Jairus that Jesus had crossed to the other side of the



THE HOUSE OF A WEALTHY JEW IN CAPERNAUM

Lake of Galilee in Peter's boat.

Jairus hastened down to the shore to watch for the return of the boat. A great crowd had already gathered there, waiting for Jesus. Soon they saw a boat approaching. As it came nearer and nearer, they could see the people on board, and among them Jesus.

Jairus recognised Him at once, and directly the boat grounded ran up to Him and, falling at His feet, cried, " My little daughter is at the point of death : I beg you to come and lay your hands upon her, and she shall live."

Jesus agreed at once and went with Jairus, the crowd pressing round and following. As Jesus stopped for a moment to say a few healing words to a poor sick woman, a grief-stricken friend of Jairus came hurrying through the crowd.

" Thy daughter is dead," he said. " Trouble not the Master further." This was sad news for the father, but Jesus turned to him at once and said, " Fear not, only believe."

When they came at last to the home of Jairus, there were already sounds of weeping and wailing, and the mourners were playing the flutes of grief.

"Why make ye this tumult and weep?" cried Jesus. "The child is not dead, but sleepeth."

At these words some laughed scornfully. Jesus told Jairus to send the mourners away. Then, taking with Him the three disciples, Peter, James and John, who were so often with Him on great occasions, He followed the father and mother to the bed where the child lay.

"*Talitha cumi*—little maid, arise," He said, taking her by her hand. She opened her eyes, stood up, smiled, and ran to her mother, who embraced her joyfully.

"Give her something to eat," said Jesus, thinking at once of the real need of the little girl and of giving the parents something to do to express their joy.

What a cheerful bustling about there must have been while a meal was being prepared. Gratitude, joy and wonder filled the parents' hearts.

SELF-HELP WORK: Make a booklet about the story of Jairus' daughter. Draw a picture of a rich Jew's house in Capernaum. Compare it with the peasant's house in Chapter I. Jesus and his friends were returning from Gergesa when Jairus met them. See Chapter XVI.

Add Ps. cxviii. 1 to your Book of Bible Verses.

Collect all the stories that mention the synagogue or tell you something about it. If you look back over your stories and group them in different ways, you will get clear ideas of many things. Each synagogue had "elders," who were generally responsible for local affairs. The *ruler* directed the services in the synagogue.

Talitha cumi are Aramaic words. You remember Aramaic was the language of Jesus and all the natives of Palestine and Syria. St. Mark gives the Aramaic, and translates it—Maid, arise—for his Roman readers.

"*The child is not dead, but sleepeth.*" St. Mark does not mean that Jesus knew she was not dead, but in a swoon. He wants to remind readers that, to the Christians, death is *not* the sleep that knows no awakening.

Copy verses from any hymns you know that speak of the healing power of Jesus.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

CENTRAL THOUGHT: *Love opens the Gates of the Kingdom of Heaven.*

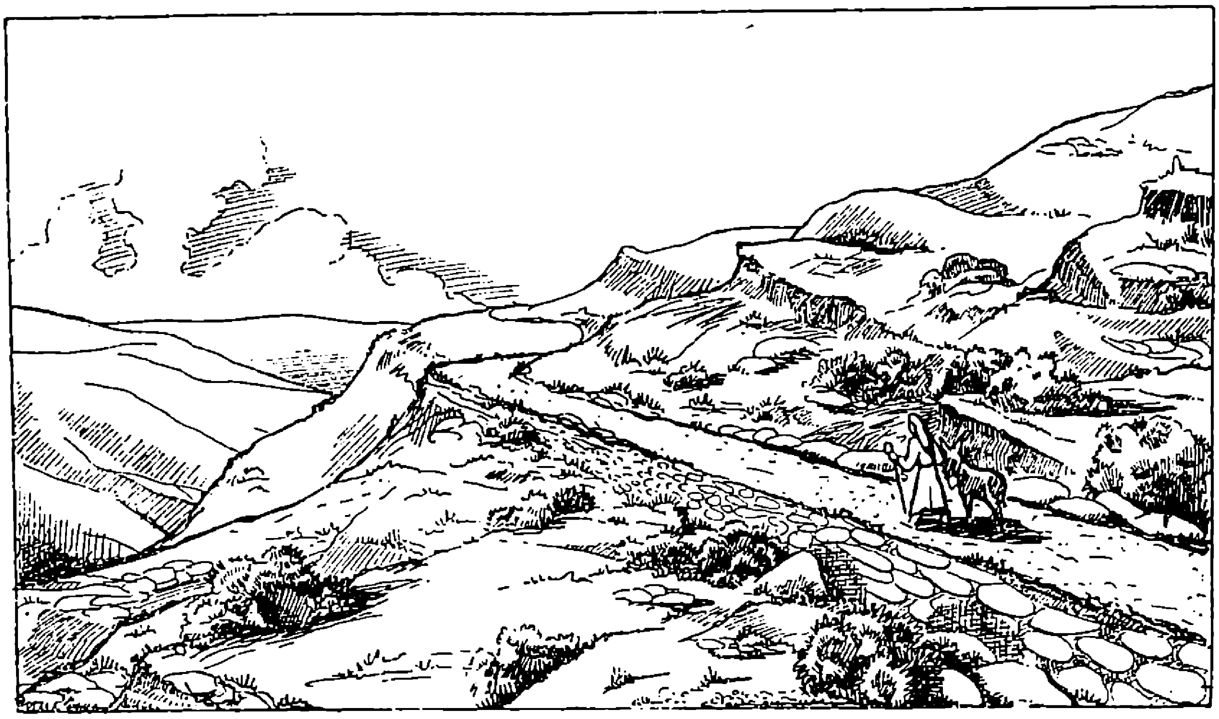
One day, when Jesus and His friends were walking towards Jerusalem, a young lawyer came up to Jesus. " Master," he said, " you have been talking about eternal life. What must I do to obtain it ? "

Jesus looked at him. " You are a lawyer," He replied, " and therefore you know what it says in the Law. What is the rule you learnt as a child and still repeat now you are a man ? "

The young lawyer knew what Jesus meant, so he said: " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself."

" Yes," said Jesus, " you have answered right. This is eternal life, to love God, and to do His Will."

" But, Master, who is my neighbour ? " asked the Scribe. He thought he knew the answer that Jesus would give, " The Jews only are your neighbours. You must love your fellow Jews, but not the Samaritans or any people of another race."



ON THE ROAD FROM JERUSALEM TO JERICHO

But instead of answering the question directly, Jesus told a beautiful story of brotherly love.

One day a traveller was coming down from Jerusalem to Jericho. It was a lonely road, often shut in by rocks in whose dark caves robber bands were likely to hide. Suddenly he was set upon by thieves, who robbed him, beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. The poor traveller longed for someone to help him. At last he heard footsteps. By chance, a priest was going down that way from the Temple; and when he saw the wounded man, he passed by on the other side. Perhaps he thought to himself, "I do not know the man. What business is it of mine? I must be home before sunset."

The wounded man lay there, helpless and suffer-

ing. It would soon be sunset, and no one passed after sunset. At last he heard footsteps again. This time the passer-by was a Levite, one of the men who helped in the Temple by singing in the choir and keeping the Temple rooms in order. When he came to the wounded man, he too passed by on the other side. Perhaps he thought, " This man is a stranger. His own friends will come and help him. It is dangerous to linger here."

If the priests and Levites of God's Temple were too busy to stop and help him, who would ? The footsteps of the Levite died away in the distance, and there was silence again.

Suddenly there came the sound of hoofs. It was a Samaritan stranger riding on his donkey. When he saw the wounded man, he was moved to pity and came to him. He did not say to himself, " This man is a Jew. He will not want me to help him, and I must get to Jericho at once." He bound up the man's wounds, gave him wine and set him on his donkey ; then, holding him there, he began to lead the animal slowly along the road until they came to an inn. Here the Samaritan stopped, and, carrying the wounded man in, took care of him all night.

In the morning he paid the innkeeper and said, " Take care of my friend until he is better. If you spend more than I have given you, I will repay you when I come again."

When Jesus finished his story, He turned to the lawyer. " Which now, of these three, do you think was neighbour to him who fell among thieves ? "

And the lawyer said, " He that showed mercy to the wounded man."

Then Jesus said, " Go thou, and do likewise."

The lesson of this parable is clearly the supremacy of love. Love opens the Gates of the Kingdom of God. Jesus makes the despised Samaritan the hero, because true neighbourliness recognises no distinction of race or caste.

SELF-HELP WORK; Copy Luke x. 27. Read aloud from the Bible Luke x. 25–37. *Lawyer* means a Scribe, one of the interpreters of the Law. *Eternal Life* is the life of the Kingdom or Rule of God.

Make a booklet about the story. Draw a plan of the road from Jericho to Jerusalem, or a picture.

Add the story to your list of stories about the Samaritans. Write the story of the Good Samaritan in the form of a play and act it. You might have five scenes: (1) A traveller saying good-bye to his wife and family. (2) The robbers plotting in a cave. (3) The traveller attacked on the road and left half dead. The passing by of the priest and Levite, and the coming of the Good Samaritan.

(4) At the inn, night and morning. (5) The traveller, safe at home, tells the story of his adventure to his family.

Add the word *Levite* to your Word Book if it is not there already. The Levites performed the lesser duties in the Temple, assisting the priests.

CHAPTER XIX

MARTHA AND MARY

CENTRAL THOUGHT: *Be not anxious about many things.*

Think of any stories you have read about Jesus in the home; you learnt something about His home-life at Nazareth in Chapters I and II, and a little about one of His visits to Peter's home at Capernaum, where He often stayed (Chapter VI). Now, there was another home that Jesus loved. This was the home of Martha and Mary, who lived with their brother Lazarus in a village called Bethany, less than a mile from Jerusalem. Jesus often came to see them when He was on His way to or from Jerusalem. Often He brought His disciples with Him and they stayed the night. The house must have been a fairly large one, with several rooms built around a courtyard, something like the house in Chapter IX. It was more peaceful at Bethany than in Jerusalem, with its crowds of people and many narrow, echoing streets.

The two sisters were very interesting, because they were so different. Martha was practical. She spent much time in housekeeping. As she was so

capable and liked to bustle about, she was often impatient with slower workers. Mary was gentle and thoughtful. She liked to listen, learn and ponder over the things she heard. We know little of their brother, the silent Lazarus, who speaks no word in the story. All we know is that Jesus was greatly attached to him. Martha and Mary spoke about him to Jesus as "He whom Thou lovest." This was the little family who made "home" for Jesus when many were against Him.

Here is a story of a visit of Jesus to Bethany, when He and His disciples were on their way to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Tabernacles. When Martha knew that He was coming, she set about getting the house ready for its special guest. Mary helped her. The bread was baked, savoury dishes prepared, the water-jars and wine-jars filled. Mary often stopped to think of what Jesus might say and what she might learn from Him; Martha worked on.

When the guests arrived, Martha fussed about, anxious to serve her elaborate meal really well, but Mary only thought of listening to Jesus. When Martha came in with a dish and saw Mary sitting absorbed in what Jesus was saying to His disciples, she was annoyed, and came to Jesus saying, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister leaves me to serve alone? Bid her help me."

Jesus, loving friend of Martha as well as of Mary, knew how she felt—hot and tired through preparing an elaborate meal. Very gently He rebuked her, " Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things. But few things are needed for a simple meal. Mary has chosen the good part, to learn from me."

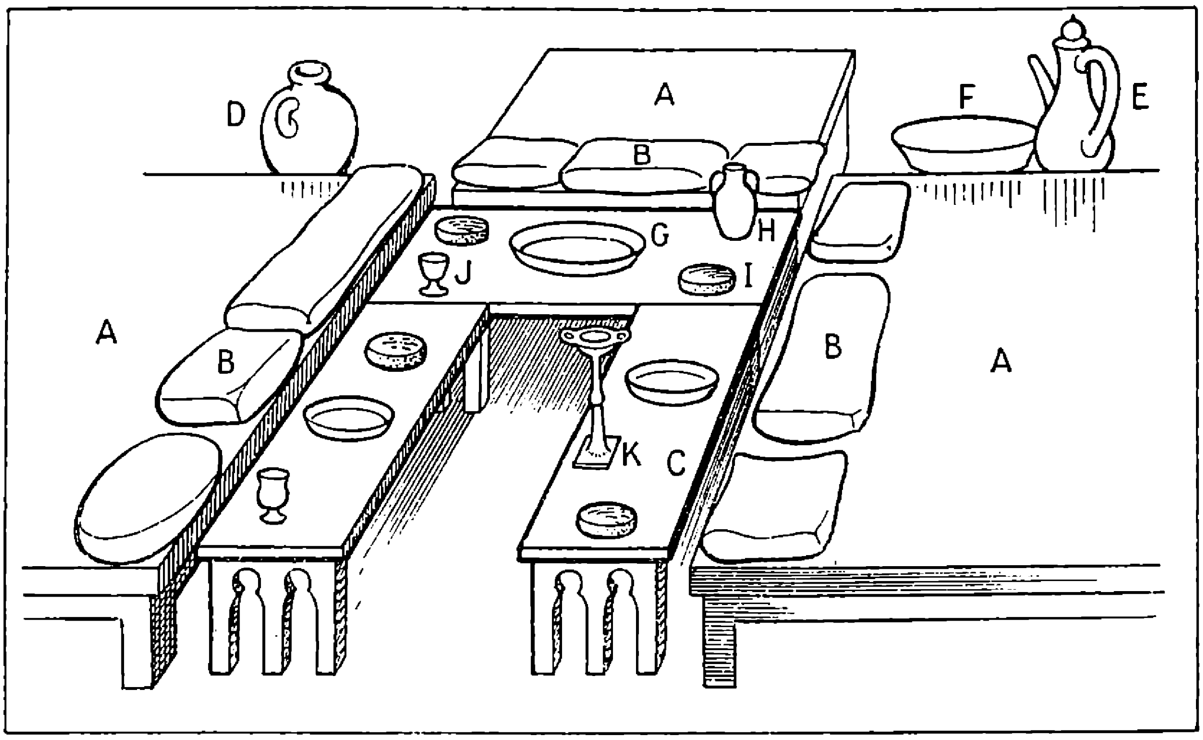
So Jesus made Martha realise that simple food set down without fuss was best, because it did not interfere with the quiet talk He wanted to have with them.

Self-help Work: In the Bible it says, " Mary sat at the Lord's feet." The phrase is there used for a pupil being taught by a rabbi. We must not think of Mary as literally sitting at the feet of Jesus or of being idle. One can work with one's brain as well as with one's hands.

The gentleness of our Lord's rebuke is seen in the repetition of her name—" Martha, Martha." Martha was practical, and our Lord's rebuke does not mean that He disapproved of practical people; it was only a warning that practical people must be careful to give time to spiritual things.

" But one thing is needful " (or few things are needful), meaning that an elaborate meal was unnecessary.

Make booklets about (*a*) Jesus in the Home.



A TRICLINIUM OR JEWISH FEAST TABLE

(A) couch; (B) cushions for supporting left elbow; (C) table; (D) and (E) water jars; (F) basin for washing the feet; (G) " the dish "; (H) flagon of wine; (I) bread (flat loaves); (J) wine cups; (K) lamp on stand.

You will find help in Chapters I, VI and XI, as well as this chapter. (*b*) The House at Bethany. Study the picture of the Jewish feast table; drawing it will help you to remember and understand it. It is something like the table arranged by Martha and Mary. The better-off Jews had adopted the Roman habit of reclining at table when they dined. *Triclinium* was the name of a Roman dining-table with couches along three sides. The table was often in three portions, forming three sides of a " square," the couches being placed along the outer sides as in the picture. This left a space on the inside sides for the servants or womenfolk to serve. The women generally had their meal after the men.

You can see how easy it was for Martha and Mary to wait on their guests. As a rule, each table had three guests. Notice " the dish " (G) that con tained the savoury, and two smaller dishes. The flat loaves of bread served as plates (I).

The Jews, as the Romans did, used their fingers instead of our spoons and forks. They dipped their fingers into the common dish or dishes. Sometimes a small piece of the thin pancake-like loaves was broken off to form a three-cornered spoon.

Draw a plan of the tables and couches. If you remember how the Jews dined and supped, it will help you to understand many of the stories in the New Testament ; for example, how the poor, sinful woman was able to wash the feet of Jesus when He dined with Simon the Pharisee, the Last Supper and so on. The poorer people, the peasants, sat on the floor for their meals. At a feast a cup of wine was handed round from which each guest drank —the " loving cup."

Make a list of the stories you meet with that have to do with a feast or supper.

Words to add to your Word Book: *triclinium*; *flagon*, a large vessel, usually with handle, spout and lid, to hold wine or water for the table.

CHAPTER XX

THE PRODIGAL SON

CENTRAL THOUGHT: *God is always ready to welcome back those who have strayed.*

Think again of the parables of the lost sheep and lost coin. In the coming story there is a lost son: it is called "The Prodigal Son." Jesus told it on the same occasion when He told the story of the lost sheep. It illustrates more beautifully perhaps than any other parable the glory of the Gospel message —the Fatherhood of God, and His Love that never forsakes sinners who truly repent.

Once there was a father who had two sons. The elder son was content to stay at home and help his father to plough the fields and look after the cattle and sheep, but the younger son wanted to leave home. One day he said to his father, "Father, give me the share of money that is due to me." The father did as he wished, and gave each son his portion of money. The elder son, content to stay at home, left his share untouched. But the younger son gathered together all he needed, and with his money took a journey into a far country. There he wasted his wealth in pleasure and excitement.

When he had spent it all, there came a great famine in that part of the country, and he began to be in want. He got work at last with a farmer, who sent him into the fields to feed the swine. He was often so hungry that he was tempted to eat the husks that he scattered for the pigs; and no man gave him anything.

When he came to himself—that is, when he saw how foolish he had been—he said, "How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight; I am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants.'"

He arose and set off for home in his poor ragged garments. And while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion; he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

His son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight; I am no more worthy to be called thy son."

But the father said to his servants, "Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and make merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again;

he was lost, and is found." And they began to be merry.

Now, the elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what it all meant. The servant said, " Thy brother has returned; and thy father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound."

The elder brother was angry, and would not go in; and his father came out and entreated him. But he answered:

" Lo, these many years do I serve thee, and I never disobeyed a commandment of thine; and yet thou never gavest me a *kid*, that I might make merry with my friends: but when this thy son came, who hath wasted thy money on wicked, foolish pleasures, thou killedst for him the *fatted calf*."

His father answered, " Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine. But it was right to make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

Self-help Work: Read the story again and notice these points: the younger son is like the publicans and sinners, the elder son is like the

Pharisees and Scribes. The elder son is jealous, but tries to excuse his jealousy by saying his father was unfair. Notice he condemns a sin for which he has no inclination. He stayed at home because it *pleased him.* He had no temptation to roam or spend money. He should have been glad to welcome his brother back to the life that he himself enjoyed.

Words and phrases to notice: " *When he came to himself*"—to repent is to realise what one's true self is, to see one's faults.

"*A far country*"—he could not do what he liked under the eyes of his father. To stray from God makes easy sins that would be impossible if we were conscious of the presence of God.

" *I have sinned against heaven*"—the Jews often used " *heaven* " for God.

" *This my son was dead*"—" dead " is an expressive word for " lost "; St. John teaches that sin is the only death.

Kid; a fatted calf was a grander dish than a kid. The word *kid* must be stressed when you read the story. His brother had a fatted calf killed for him, but he was not offered even a kid.

Copy and learn Luke xv. 22–4.

Act the story. Write it in the form of a play first, if it is easier. Make a booklet about the story of " The Prodigal Son." *Prodigal* means wasteful,

foolishly wasteful. The husks were the pods of the carob- or locust-tree, and were used to feed cattle, horses and pigs.

Write a conversation between two men on the farm after the prodigal son had returned. They will have heard something about his life in the far country.

Add words to your Word Book, e.g. *prodigal, swine, compassion, husks.*

Make a list of the parables you know. Say what each teaches about the New Kingdom, God's Kingdom of Love.

One day you will read more about Jesus and His wonderful words and deeds.

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HOW TO USE THE INDEX

(1) If you want to discover what the book says about any person or place, look up the name in the index. Suppose you want to find out about *Capernaum*. The index gives you all the pages on which it is mentioned. Look up each and copy what it says. Then you can write a very full account of the town, telling who lived there, what happened there, and so on.

(2) If you are studying the map (frontispiece) and see the name *Sychar*, you may feel quite sure you have never met this word in any of the chapters. You look in the index and find it. Then you go back and read the story again. You can test yourselves on your reading by means of the index. Pick out a word in the index. Think what you know about it. Take, for example, *Sanhedrin*. If you know nothing, look it up and learn something about it. Test each other in this way.

(3) You will find the index very useful if you want to write a long account of, for example, the Pharisees. Or you may want to find the names of the trees mentioned in the book. This is an interesting thing to do, as it gives you some idea of the climate and appearance of the country. When you read through a book, you are often so interested in the story that you forget the details and the interesting words. The index will help you to get a great deal more out of your book.

Here are some exercises for you. With the help of the index, find out all you can about: (*a*) the Book of the Law or Pentateuch, (*b*) publicans, (*c*) Simon Peter, (*d*) Herod the Great, (*e*) Mount Gerizim, (*f*) Harvests in Palestine, (*g*) the Greeks, (*h*) Bethsaida.

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